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THE
ECLECTIC
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 CONGREGATIONAL REVIEW.

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THE ECLECTIC, ETC.

I.

LAURENCE STERNE.*

WE are not certain that our readers will much care to have set before them the life of so very doubtful a character as that of Laurence Sterne, but Mr. Fitzgerald's book has, we believe, the merit of being the first very distinct attempt to see the whole *physique* of a master of English humour of unquestioned power and frequent beauty, yet also of literary delinquencies as unquestioned—the more shocking as, from the nature of his profession, sully the character of an English clergyman even more, may we not say, than they can possibly sully the genius or the artist. It is in no merely captious and Nonconformist spirit, however, that we remind ourselves of the general character of clergymen of the age of Sterne, and that immediately preceding. Lord Macaulay and Mr. Thackeray have, in sketches immortal for their humour and faithfulness, brought before us the features of the clergy of those times. We should, perhaps, be justified in citing the Established pulpits of those ages as illustrations of that to which the State will generally bring its pet Church. As we run the eye over the associates of Laurence Sterne and his clerical surroundings, relatives, and others, the whole affair strikes one as matchlessly disgraceful—old Archbishop Sterne, Dr. Jaques Sterne, Archbishop Blackburn, infidel and voluptuary—they all strike one as furnishing a nest of immoral and political place-hunters. The sentiment of the humorist would give to him a certain tone and temper of character, making the Church not so disagreeable to him as to some of her darling sons; but it is not, of course, pretended that he had any tastes or tendencies, or moral or intellectual proclivities towards such a religious life. He was there simply because clerical relatives were able to help him better there than elsewhere. He was more indecent, but perhaps he was not so hol-

* *The Life of Laurence Sterne.* By Percy Fitzgerald, M.A., M.R.I.A.
2 vols. Chapman and Hall.

low as Dr. Young, the author of another "sentimental journey," called *The Night Thoughts*. In his way, Dr. Young was, for the times in which he lived, and the Established Church of those times, a good man. His chief book contains an estimate of the plan of salvation, and of the comparative value of temporal and eternal things, which probably Sterne could not have developed so coherently; but he was a notorious place-hunter, and the throng of clerical place-hunters around him only prevents the application of "monstrous;" nor does he seem to have been unwilling to draggle his holy cassock or surplice through any routs or balls to secure comfortable livings. *The Night Thoughts* of Dr. Young suggest a curious picture of the "devout astronomer" translated or transcribed from a hollow courtier. Of the two we think we rather like Sterne better. There was much more evil in him; indeed, his seems to have been an essentially evil nature, which Young's was not—but for Sterne, as for so many other sinners in an evil world, there was an infinity of extenuating circumstances, and Mr. Fitzgerald has done his best to win for him a more favourable verdict than that severe summing up of the opinions of all posterity since, pronounced by Mr. Thackeray. We are sorry to feel that our long held impressions are not much affected; several new sympathies have been elicited for a life which assuredly could not have been a very happy one; but, while it is impossible for such humour as Sterne's frequently is, to have proceeded from a soul without healthy moral sympathies, it is still to be thought that his sensibilities were frequently only superficial, and that even those cunning truths which seem to reveal the great depths of a master-spirit were too frequently the dashes of an artist's pencil, which it was known by the author would strike and tell. But let us look at the man's life.

From a ripe old Yorkshire family, untitled, but still of the nobility of the country, struggled into existence the poor priest, Laurence Sterne. His family had no patent or coronet, but it boasted pure and uncorrupted pedigree—unbroken descent—illustrious alliances—men of mark on the field and in the council-chamber—a fixed and unchanged home for centuries, in an ancestral mansion, whose walls had concealed hunted priests, and had been battered by the blows of old Ironsides. The glory of the family seems to have been one of its latest scions, to whom we have already referred, Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York, the humorist's great grandfather. It was he who, as the master of Jesus College, seized the Cambridge plate and sent it for warlike purposes to Charles I. Both it and he were subsequently seized by Cromwell.

Dr. Sterne had a life of adventure as various and wonderful as Lieutenant Sterne, the father of our hero. He was pitched from prison to prison, stood a narrow chance of being sold to Algerine pirates, and was yet allowed to attend his friend, Archbishop Laud, on the scaffold. During the days of Cromwell he was permitted to live obscurely, keeping a school in Hertfordshire; then when the King came home, he was raised to the bishopric of Carlisle, and thence transferred to the archiepiscopal throne of York. His reputation is full of queer contradictions. He has been named as the author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, and had literary regards in general; on the contrary, he seems to have dealt hardly with Nonconformists; and Bishop Burnet called him "a sour, ill-tempered divine, who minded principally the enriching of his own family." This he did; the family, however, partly as a consequence of its great Yorkshire interests, had a branch in Ireland, and from this descended the famous Laurence. His father was a certain Roger Sterne, who seems to have been a poor fellow enough—a poor marching ensign; he married one Agnes Hebert, or Herbert, the widow of a captain in the army of that name. She was apparently a fair young creature, and from the time of her second marriage, her life and that of her husband is little more than a record of weary journeyings in continental warfare, and incessant parturition. The English Rabelais, the immortal Tristram, was born before his mother had time to rest or recover, after a long march, at Clonmel. Our readers will take little interest in following the strange fortunes of his parents from stage to stage; their life, and the life of the little Laurence, during the first years, has quite an unhappy aspect about it. At last, after many wanderings together, Lieutenant Sterne left his wife behind him, while he first went away to the bombardment of the rock of Gibraltar, "in which," Mr. Fitzgerald pleasantly remarks, "it might have been supposed that any soldier "would have found his fill of fighting," but Lieutenant Sterne and his Captain, one Phillips, fell a quarrelling about a goose; the quarrel ended in a duel, in which our Lieutenant was run through the body by Captain Phillips. Tradition says the duel took place in a room; Captain Phillips put his rapier with such vigour through Lieutenant Sterne's person that he pinned him to the wall behind, whereupon the Lieutenant, with great courtesy, begged the Captain, before withdrawing his blade, that he would brush off any plaster adhering to the point. The Lieutenant survived the impalement, but it was yet to be the death of him. With an impaired constitution he went to Jamaica, was seized by what the sailors call Yellow Jack, the

country fever, sent to Port Antonio, on the north side of the island, and there, of consumption,—probably inherent in his constitution, and accelerated by that awkward thrust through the lung—in the remote tropical island he breathed his last. Continually walking without complaining, he sat down in an arm-chair, and gently breathed life away, in the same tranquil manner as the marching Lieutenant Lefevre, in which matchless portrait, it is understood, his son sought to exhibit some filial affection to his father:—"Nature instantly ebbed again—the film returned to its place—the pulse fluttered—stopped—went on—throbbed—stopped again—moved—stopped—shall I go on? No!" So ended the poor Lieutenant's hopeless pilgrimage. "His wife," says Mr Fitzgerald, "was little more than a poor, genteel tramp." She also sinks under the waters, and little more is seen of her. Three children remained, Maria, Catherine, and Laurence, who was about sixteen years old, and in the Halifax free school; his cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to him, and through him he was able, in 1732, to enter of Jesus College, Cambridge, most picturesque of all colleges, with its soft and shady avenue of trees and the murmuring Cam by its side. At college he was probably remarkable for a rather desultory industry—reading, but not exactly the books likely to procure him classical honours; he gained the character of being an odd man, with parts if he would but use them—a tall, shrunken, restless figure. At Cambridge, too, he felt the first grip of "the old man of the sea" of his life. Though he weathered many storms, and advanced forward to the later years allotted to our race, he belonged to a consumptive stock; so many children had been taken, one wonders how he escaped. But at Cambridge came the first attack of the cough which had fatality in it. He broke a blood-vessel, and had a narrow escape of joining his frail little brothers and sisters and father. He does not seem to have aimed at scholarship; his biographers and his works alike testify to the strangely inaccurate and crude state of his rudimental knowledge. Cambridge was not likely to cultivate his scholarship much; the poet Gray, a scholar and man of genius, contemporary with Sterne, applies to the university the language in which the prophet describes Babylon—"The wild beast of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be the abode of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy for wild asses." A pretty description truly of an university. He who wrote it, the reserved and classic author of the *Elegy*, shifted his quarters to avoid the rioting of young men of fortune. It is not to be supposed that

he would know much of Sterne or his associates. Nearly contemporary with him was another celebrity, training for the Church, though it is not probable that the two future clergymen brushed gowns; but years far on, his fellow student Dr. Dodd, before he managed to get himself hung, addressed verses, with the tender familiarity of a friend, to Sterne, on the demoralizing tendency of *Tristram*. Leaving college, he was ordained in 1736, a deacon, and in 1738, a priest of the Church of England. Mr. Fitzgerald says upon this event very truly:—

A day of doubtful omen as regards the course of his future life—an unfortunate step, which shall colour his whole coming career: for even those who shall hereafter judge of him most charitably, cannot but own that he was radically unfitted for the serious office he had chosen, and that he was but fitting sacred fetters on his nature, which would embarrass his motions at every step. In his nature there was far too much mercurial vitality for it to fall, by the sheer force of routine, into the hackneyed duties of his profession; which, after a short struggle, would have been the result with more ordinary minds. Now was to begin for him a ceaseless struggle—his gown clinging to him like an ecclesiastical shirt of Nessus, and hampering him as he tries to turn; until at last, weary with the constant labour, he rends it into shreds, and trips along the highways and open streets without shame.

With him it was no worse than with many of his cloth, upon whom a sort of destiny, rather than their own choice, has thrust the surplice; but who, with a humdrum mediocrity, could decently adapt themselves to its straightness. But with these wild irregulars—these *mousseux* temperaments—“with us, you see, the case is quite different;” for “instead of the cold phlegm and exact regularity of sense and humours you would have looked for, he was, on the contrary, as mercurial and sublimated a composition—as heteroclit a creature in all his declensions—with as much life and whim, *gaieté de cœur*, about him, as the kindest climate could have engendered. With all this sail, poor Yorick carried not one ounce of ballast; he was utterly unpractised in the world, and at the age of twenty-six knew just about as well how to steer his course in it as a romping, unsuspecting girl of nineteen.” This was the newly-fashioned priest, “carrying not one ounce of ballast,” and also within a few months of his twenty-sixth year; which does indeed seem as though the picture were intended for this date of his entry upon sacerdotal life.

But there were inducements, sufficient and substantial in a certain point of view, which hurried our new clergyman into his profession. It is not given to all men to have a primate ancestor a few branches up the family tree; or a wealthy cousin, with broad lands and local influence, who has promised to be a “father to them;” or a swelling ecclesiastical uncle, busy and bustling and political. The Reverend Laurence did no more than many of his fellows; but his misfortune was having that “mercurial and sublimated composition within him,” and that unlucky deficit in the matter of ballast.

And now the young man was to prove how good and pleasant a thing it is to have a well-to-do uncle in the Church, that Jaques Sterne, LL.D., a fighting Whig and fierce zealot; a florid, bustling, busy clergyman — portly and substantial — hurrying about to the music of his gown, flapping like the sails and cordage of a ship. He was an eminent pluralist—an ecclesiastical *condottiere*, ready to grab at anything and fight anybody; it is undoubted that he belonged to the Church militant, but concerning his relation to the other church we have not yet received authentic intelligence. It is pleasant to read the list of the good gentleman's dignities:—

He was a Canon Residentiary, a Prebendary, and Precentor of York Cathedral—the precentorship coming to him in the year 1735, by way of guerdon for the election services of the preceding year. He is besides Rector of Rise, and Rector of Hornsea-cum-Ritson, in the East Riding—offices slender, it must be confessed, in their emoluments, but still acceptable. By-and-by, in the year 1746, drops in the Archdeaconry of Cleveland; and ten years later, he takes a spring over into another county—his Majesty “the King having been pleased to grant unto Jaques Sterne, LL.D., the place and dignity of Second Prebendary in the Cathedral Church of Durham.” Finally, in 1750, another pluralist dying, Dr. Dering, who was both Dean of Ripon and Archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire, Dr. Wanley is promoted to the first dignity, and “Jaques Sterne, LL.D.” (as he is still set out in the morning prints of the time), to the second.

He was a high church bigot, but, our readers will perceive, with abundant power to help his poor waif of a nephew. He resided in York, that old York which has scarcely lost its hazy crown of splendour, and its hoar frost work of reverent regardings, even with all the bustle and push and railway indifferences of modern days. York was then in its metropolitan splendour perhaps, and in it and its neighbourhood Laurence Sterne was to pass much of his time and all his quiet and obscure years. The reader sees it now very much as Sterne saw it then—its noble wall—its quaint bars—its pure and awful minster—its queer little dodging courts, alleys and streets, closes and corners, where canons and such holy persons most do congregate, and as the reader walks up Coney Street he sees probably very much such a street as very often echoed the step of the “thin, spare, hollow chested youth with joints and members but ill kept together; curious bright eyes and a Voltairean mouth.” Here in the city his uncle kept up a bachelor establishment in the Minster Yard, and in the Castlegate was the old mansion of the Sternes, and he had a sort of rustic retreat just outside York, “a little sungilt cottage on the side of a romantic hill;” and the

first love passages also date from this time with a young Staffordshire lady named Lumley, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Lumley, Rector of Bedal. Here he experienced, and for this lady, says his biographer, the first of that train of sentimental passions which were to become almost constitutional with him; the courtship was a long one, without any particular reason for its length—a sort of “sorrows of Werter” kind of affair, which, while it calls for no reprobation, inspires no respect. It had a good deal of that anatomical self-dissecting sentiment in which there is something of honesty and nature, but still more of exaggeration and affectation. However, when he had been duly ordained, he was, by his uncle’s interest, inducted into the vicarage of Sutton on the Forest; this in 1738. In 1740 he became one of the twenty-six York prebends. The coveted preferment had come early; he had attained that dignity described by another saintly and witty priest of the English church, Sydney Smith—“Their preferment is coveted, and to get a stall, and to be preceded by men with silver rods is the bait which the ambitious squire is perpetually holding out to his second son.” And now the way seemed clear to marriage. Mr. Sterne appears to have been very inconsistently constant to Elizabeth Lumley, and when she seemed stricken by consumption, and one night when he was sitting by her and she said,—“My dear Laury, I can never be yours, for I verily believe I have not long to live. But I have left you every shilling of my fortune and upon this showed Mr. Sterne his will”—it would seem he said such words, that Miss Lumley’s health began to mend. It pleased God that she recovered, and in 1741 they were married; it cannot be said they lived happily together for ever after. Mr. Sterne was twenty-seven years old: we stay with him now for many years in his quiet but very pleasant little country vicarage. There seem to be very few traces as yet of that life of mere heartlessness, suggestive of profligacy, which comes to light in later years; it is to be feared there could never have been any very great sympathy with his special work—instead we find him engaged in fiddling—in painting—in some attempts at verse making, of which, in the following lines, full of charming simplicity and quaintness, Mr. Fitzgerald gives us an illustration probably till now unknown to the world.

THE UNKNOWN ☉.

Verses occasioned by hearing a Pass-Bell.

By y^e Rev^d. Mr. ST—N.

Hark^e my gay Fr^d y^t solemn Toll
Speaks y^e departure of a soul;

'Tis gone, y^ts all we know—not where
 Or how y^e unbody'd soul do's fare—
 In that mysterious ☉ none knows,
 But ☉ alone to w^m it goes,
 To whom departed souls return
 To take their doom to smile or mourn.

Oh! by w^t glimmering light we view
 The unknown ☉ we're hast'ning to!
 God has lock'd up y^e mystic Page,
 And curtained darkness round y^e stage;
 Wise ☿ to render search perplext
 Has drawn 'twixt y^e ☉ & y^e next
 A dark impenetrable screen
 All behind w^{ch} is yet unseen!
 We talk of ☿, we talk of Hell,
 But w^t yy mean no tongue can tell!
 Heaven is the realm where angels are
 And Hell the chaos of despair.
 But what y^{ese} awful truths imply,
 None of us know before we die!
 Wheth^{er} we will or no, we must
 Take the succeeding ☉ on trust.

This hour perhaps or Fr^d is well
 Death-struck y^e next he cries, Farewell.
 I die! and yet for aught we see,
 Ceases at once to breath and be—
 Thus launch'd f^m life's ambiguous shore
 Ingulph'd in Death appears no more,
 Then undirected to repair,
 To distant ☉s we know not where.
 Swift flies the ♃, perhaps 'tis gone
 A thousand leagues beyond the sun;
 Or 2^{ce} 10 thousand more 3^{ce} told
 Ere the forsaken clay is cold!
 And yet who knows if Fr^{nds} we lov'd
 Tho' dead may be so far removed;
 Only y^e vail of flesh between,
 Perhaps yy watch us though unseen.
 Whilst we, y^{ir} loss lamenting, say,
 They're out of hearing far away;
 Guardians to us perhaps they're near
 Concealed in vehicles of air—
 And yet no notices yy give
 Nor tell us where, nor how yy live;
 Tho' conscious whilst with us below,
 How much y^{ms} desired to know—
 As if bound up by solemn Fate
 To keep the secret of y^{ir} state,
 To tell y^{ir} joys or pains to none,
 That man might live by Faith alone.
 Well, let my sovereign, if he please,
 Lock up his marvellous decrees;
 Why sh^d I wish him to reveal,
 W^t he thinks proper to conceal?
 It is enough y^t I believe

Heaven's bright^r yⁿ I can conceive ;
And he y^t makes it all his care
To serve God here shall see him there !
But oh ! w^t ☉^s shall I survey
The moment y^t I leave y^s clay ?
How sudden y^e surprise, how new !
Let it, my God, be happy too—

Our biographer says these lines in some way recal the tone of the 'Soul's Errand;' to us they more resemble Parnell's celebrated 'Night Piece on Death.' Meantime, the married life which had begun in passion had developed in spleen; or, if there was little bitterness in the parsonage at Sutton there was very little sympathy. Mrs. Sterne was one of those women who possess the power to kindle an affection they cannot sustain. She seems to have been an insipid and monotonous woman, and Mr. Shandy appears to have described her when he mourns the "luck of being master of one of the finest chains of reasoning in nature, and have a wife at the same time with such a head piece that he cannot hang up a single inference withinside of it to save his soul from destruction."

If Laurence Sterne will bear anywhere, or at any period of his life, a favourable glance, it is in those days when he seems to have followed in some measure the pursuits of his profession in his country vicarage. Never does he appear to be imitable, but there are moments when his life appears more quiet, and to have in it a tone of health and regularity; but it is a queer life, with sometimes politics and sometimes an amatory adventure, sometimes a scene in York, and sometimes a more than ordinarily brilliant display in the pulpit. These are the alternations of those years. Laurence Sterne in the pulpit is an exhibition we should be glad to spare; yet it is for the most part the character of the man out of it which makes the ground of exception. What his parishioners in those little remote Yorkshire villages thought of his displays it is curious to imagine. There was a bold originality and daring of style about the sermons of this preacher, there was an unmistakeableness about the style, which, reprehensible as they frequently are in method and in composition, renders them still worthy of perusal, and even of study. There is no spiritual rest in them, there is very little spiritual truth; they are defective in doctrinal statement, and they are far from perfect even as exhibitions of the morality of the gospel and of the Scriptures; but there is an agility of speech, there is a sleepless interest of manner which is very noticeable. This is sometimes, even frequently purchased at the expense of a due reverence for sacred things, but in that day there probably was scarcely another man in a village pulpit

who spoke to his hearers with any measure of nature or of eloquence sufficiently to interest by its pathos.

Mr. Fitzgerald says, referring to the publication of the famous adventures of Friar Gerund:—

It is curious that in the very year this odd book came out there should have been an obscure Yorkshire parson entertaining his Sunday congregations with sermons conceived very much after this grotesque pattern. This was a tall, lank, and straggling figure, ill-fitted together, and singularly odd in appearance,—a strangely-formed face, twinkling eyes, a sly mouth, and a nose “shaped like the ace of spades.” This was Parson Sterne,—Parson Shandy, presently to write a sort of English Pantagruel romance, which was to convulse the town. But he was now obscure, and was entertaining himself and his parishioners with weekly bursts of Shandeism in the pulpits of his little churches of Sutton and Stillington.

Shall we enter one or other of these sacred edifices on some Sunday when the vicar himself is about to preach, and hearken to one of these odd discourses; while the Yorkshire congregations, who have come, according to their degree, in the family-coach, or in the clumsy “white chapel,” or upon the back of the heavy Yorkshire “Punch,” are disposed, in smart Sunday uniform, down the aisles? Here, in his own pew, is the surly lord of the parish, Squire Harland, with whom the vicar was not upon terms, but who went for the glory of his family-sitting, and to growl at dinner over the queer tricks of his enemy; while conspicuous in the Stillington congregation were the faces of the Croft family, the firmest of Mr. Sterne’s many firm friends, and to whose enduring affection he testified after a nearly thirty years’ trial. Both Harlands and Crofts, descendants of his enemy and of his friend, still sit in the pews at Sutton and Stillington.

Here is now the long strange figure of the celebrant, making for his pulpit, with that odd spasmodic gait, his gown fluttering behind, and the curious Voltairean smile on his face. Those must have been strange and bewildering discourses for the congregations: in parts utterly unintelligible to the Yorkshire yeomen; in parts as entertaining as *Tristram*. How acceptable now would be even a tradition of the manner and gesture with which he coloured his speech; the fashion with which he suited the Shandean action to the Shandean word! Yet, from the abrupt transitions in print, the dashes, the turns, the breakings-off, we may be almost sure that his voice and delivery reflected all the starts and spasms of his manner. Did he keep “his body swayed and bent forwards, just so far as to make an angle of eighty-three degrees and a half upon the plane of the horizon, which sound orators know to be the true persuasive angle of incidence?” and which was the attitude into which Trim fell instinctively when about to preach his famous sermon On Conscience? The Vicar of Sutton was not likely to be trammelled by such artificial rules, and had not much esteem for the orthodox angle; for “in any other angle you may talk and preach, ’tis certain, and it is done every day,” and most frequently on those Sun-

days and festivals at Stillington and Sutton, where the lean body bent over the pulpit-edge, and the long arms swung in utter defiance of conventional rules.

A most strange style. How surprised must his audience have been when one Sabbath he began

Solemnly from Romans, “ ‘Despisest thou the riches of His goodness, knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance?’ So says St. Paul. And Ecclesiastes viii. 11 : ‘Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.’ *Take either as you like it, you will get nothing by the bargain.*”

Or, on another occasion, when he selected the singular theme of “the Levite and his concubine” for the Sunday’s entertainment, treating it with an easy and courageous familiarity that must have confounded his rustic hearers. “For he arose and went after her,” said Mr. Sterne, “having his servants with him, and a couple of asses. And when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. *A most sentimental group, you’ll say. And so it is, my good commentator. The world talks of everything.*”

His sermon on Shimei is a perfect illustration of the man. He shows how Shimei reflects all the features of David according to the true temper of the world; as he prospers he is forwarded, as he is unlucky he reviles him.

“The wheel turns round once more. David returns in peace; and had the wheel turned round a hundred times, Shimei, I dare say, in every period of its rotation, would have been uppermost.” At which sycophancy Mr. Sterne breaks out sarcastically: “Oh Shimei! would to Heaven, when thou wert slain, that all thy family had been slain with thee, and not one of thy resemblance left! *But ye have multiplied exceedingly, and replenished the earth; and, if I prophesy rightly, ye will in the end subdue it.*” These modern Shimeis are the most fatal evils of society. “’Tis a character we shall never want. Oh, it infests the court, the camp, the Cabinet; it infests the Church. Go where you will, in every profession you see a Shimei, following the wheels of the fortunate through *thick mire and clay.*”

This stroke does indeed seem pointed at a diaconal Shimei only eight miles away, and called “Jacques Sterne, LL.D.”

“Haste, Shimei!” Mr. Sterne goes on, warming; “haste, or thou wilt be undone for ever! . . . Shimei doubles his speed. . . Stay Shimei; ’tis your patron! ’Tis all one to Shimei. Shimei is the barometer of every man’s fortune; marks the rise and fall of it, with all the variations, from scorching hot to freezing cold, in his countenance, *that the simile will admit of.*” (This stroke is Tristram all over.) “Hast thou been spoken for to the king, or the captain of the host” —i.e., commander-in-chief—“without success? Look not into the *Court Calendar; the vacancy is filled up in Shimei’s face.*”

When poor Tristram was laid in the grave, and wife and daughter looked over those sermons, strange notes were seen on them. In the corner of one had been timidly written with a crow's quill, in a small hand, *Bravo*, but which was modestly crossed out. On another, "N.B. The excellency of this text is that it will suit any sermon as the sermon will suit any text." On another, "This is but a flimsy kind of a composition. What was in my head when I wrote it?" On another, "For this sermon I shall be hanged; for I have stolen the greater part of it, Dr. Paidagunus found me out, set a thief to catch a thief." On the whole, he fulfilled his office of preacher, we do not say pastor, earnestly, really, faithfully; and he continued till within three or four years of his death this pastoral duty. Yet he wrote, "Preaching I have no strength for; it is ever fatal to me, yet I cannot avoid the latter yet." And he persisted. It was distasteful to him, and the sermons even show it must have been so, and this makes his success and diligence more remarkable.

In referring to these sermons, the sermons of Mr. Yorick, we perhaps step forward too rapidly. They were published when verging upon fifty years of age; their preacher had stepped from the obscurity of his Yorkshire village and was famous, we had almost said notorious, beyond any example of a literary man of those times. They belonged to a more quiet, we may even say in comparison, a dutiful period of his life. If marvellous inconsistency can disgust, in spite of all the arts of rhetoric, then they must disgust. This was the effect they produced upon burly old Johnson. He never could find a friendly word for Sterne, always called him "the man Sterne;" once a lady asked him, "had he not read Mr. Yorick's sermons?" and he replied, "I know nothing about them, madam." Later on, the subject was renewed, and he censured them with great severity. The lady had not forgotten his tart reply and said, "I thought you had not read them, sir." "No, madam," roared the sage, "I did read them, but it was in a stage coach—I should not have deigned to have looked at them had I been at large." In his own city of Lichfield his animosity to these sermons manifested itself again; one Mr. Wickins showed him the volume—"Sir," roared the Dr., "do you ever read any others?" "Yes sir," answered Mr. Wickens, with a little spiritual vanity perhaps, "I read Sherlock, and Tillotson, and Beveridge, and others." "Ay sir," said Johnson, "there you drink the cup of salvation to the bottom—here you have merely the froth from the surface." Still, there were temperate moments when Johnson seems to have been able to appreciate these and other of Mr. Sterne's performances. There are many

characteristics of this village time at which we have dimly hinted. Before he entered upon the great world of London, the position of his family in the country, of his uncle in the city, and of himself in the cathedral, gave him the entrance to all the chief society of the neighbourhood ; and, although his powers were unknown, and apparently unsuspected, and he was certainly a comparatively poor man, he was a marked man, and on several great occasions was the preacher in the minster. It was in the minster that famous sermon on *Conscience* was preached, which reappeared from the lips of *Corporal Trim* in *Tristram Shandy*. In the parsonage at Sutton went on the routine of domestic life. We have already said, spite of the romantic love making, Mrs. Sterne must have been a monotonous body, but there was born first one little Lydia—but the day following the registry of baptism bears testimony to the burial—bye and bye was born another Lydia, who survived her father, to whom he wrote his sketchy autobiography, and whom he certainly loved, but who has done more than any one beside to profane her father's memory. Lounging to and fro through his villages, riding the most miserable Rosinante of the neighbourhood, the lean spare figure with the mysterious eyes and Voltairean mouth, and all sorts of wondrous Cervantic and Rabelaisian humors in the head of it, was preparing itself for work. A character for wit, but of a very quiet and not frequent kind, the man must have had ; here is a little trace of it.

Entering "The George," we find Mr. Sterne sitting with a large company, chiefly "gentlemen of the gown," listening with deep offence to a smart young fellow scattering his flippancies against the clergy and the whole *personnel* of religion—specially addressing himself to the hypocrisy of ministers. At length, when he has made an end, he turns to our Laurence, and rashly and besottedly asks if he does not agree with him. Possibly he interpreted that Voltairean mouth as being sure to deal with Voltairean matter. With a twinkle of those eyes, and a lifting of the corners of that ace-of-hearts mouth, the young clergyman ignores the question utterly, and begins to describe a particular pointer of his, reckoned the most beautiful in the whole country, but which had one "infer-trick," of always flying at clergymen. Here was warning for the incautious youth—there was mischief at the bottom of this apologue, and he should draw off while there is yet time. But he must put a question—from sheer embarrassment, perhaps : "How long, sir, may he have had that trick?"—"Sir," replies the other (and we see Mr. Sterne taking his first Shandean summersault), "*ever since he was a puppy!*" The witling was crushed, amid the tumultuous applause of "gentlemen of the gown." The joke was presently all over Yorkshire. People now begin to respect—even to regard with awe—the man who kept such dangerous petards by him, and will be cautious of offence.

There were cathedral embroilments also in which the humorist came out in "the History of a good warm watch coat." There seem also to have been love makings, especially with a Miss Fourmantelle, but we very heartily agree with Mr. Fitzgerald in the belief that, reprehensible as this and other such adventures are in Sterne's life, they probably never expressed more than a present amount of platonic sentiment. It is very possible to go through a world of folly with women without condescension to sin, only that the folly itself of course is sin. We suppose Sterne's temperament to have been of an order to encourage much of this gloss of mere wicked frippery of sentiment, terminating however in words; the indelicacy and filthiness which pervades much of his writing, so far from shaking this impression, as in the case of Dean Swift, seems rather to confirm it. Meantime, while at York, the trumpets of Tristram were sounding in his soul. The two first volumes of the work, very small, were written and published in 1759, and by a sudden bound the strange, quaint, queer humour, the happy, easy, piquant elegance of the thing made him one of the most celebrated men in England and France. Mr. Fitzgerald recites to us the adventures of Mr. Sterne on his visit to London speedily after the publication of *Tristram Shandy*; it consumed the best part of a week in those times to travel from York to London, and the journey was therefore not very frequently made, and yet it seemed to be overcrowded. If Mr. Shandy could indulge in the following reflections in his day, what would he say now?

"Was I an absolute prince, I would appoint able judges at every avenue of my metropolis, who should take cognizance of every fool's business who came there; and if, upon a fair and candid hearing, it appeared not of weight sufficient to leave his own home, and come up bag and baggage with his wife and children, they should all be sent back, from constable to constable, like vagrants, as they were, to the place of their legal settlements." He would take care that the metropolis "tottered not through its own weight;" that "the head should not be too big for the body," and that the extremes "now wasted and pinned in," be restored to their due "share of nourishment."

Certainly, he had no conception, as he travelled the dull weary way, of the apotheosis that awaited him, and marvellous as was his reception by the great town, so marvellously must we think it exaggerated his merits; for, if he be our English Cervantes, and even if it be admitted that he is a fair rival to Cervantes, certainly it is not in the two first volumes of *Tristram Shandy* that the greatest strokes of his genius appear. But it was an odd book, and he was an odd man—passport sufficient

any day without any other recommendation for *Vanity Fair*. His lodgings in Pall Mall were besieged by all the great. Surely it is the satirist who speaks when he writes home—"even all the bishops have sent their compliments to me." The famous Chesterfield took him under his wing; even that savage and ruthless creature, Warburton, was conciliatory and kind. Is it wonderful, with such compliments from his episcopal chieftains, that he felt no misgivings about Tristram? or that he plunged into many a fashionable folly? Why, truly, we believe with Mr. Fitzgerald that it is very shocking that such a writer as Sterne should be a clergyman. We could scarcely tolerate now the pure and healthful Dickens in that profession, and yet Sterne was far enough away from being one of the worst clergymen of his time; on the contrary, he was one of the best. He was not a blasphemer, like Horne Tooke, who apologized to a still more reckless blasphemer, John Wilkes, for having suffered the infectious hand of a bishop to be waived over him—"whose imposition," he said, "like the sop given to Judas, was only the signal for the devil to enter." Sterne was not a duelling parson like the Rev. Mr. Bates, "a promising young man," as the papers called him, who went out and was killed in a fair fight. Sterne was not a fighting and bruising parson like Churchill, Henley and others. We do not extenuate him, or his character, or his writings, but what was the condition of the Church in that day? Our readers remember how Lord Sandwich when dining with twelve clergymen coarsely insisted, that if their pockets were turned out, it would be found that not one had a prayer-book, and everyone had a corkscrew. It exhibits the impression of those times, nor was it thought that Parson Trulliber was an overdrawn portrait, or that the Chaplain of Newgate in *Jonathan Wild* exhibited any extraordinary ignorance when he expressed his preference for "Punch, the rather" that it was a liquor mentioned in the Holy Scripture." Into the midst of this society came Sterne to be petted and led about and lionized. "It was the most brilliant London campaign," says Mr. Fitzgerald, "ever fought by a successful man of letters." We are sorry to have to think of the man of letters as a clergyman. After three months of it he returned to York and to rustic life. Again in the May of this year he preached before the judges; but there was a simplicity he carried with him to London, it seems certain he did not bring back with him. His was an eminently unbalanced and unballasted mind, and York and his Yorkshire curacies seem never to have been sufficient for him again. He became unrested, and the reader who follows the course of his life will follow him now frequently far

away from home. He entered upon another curacy, Coxwold, sixteen miles from York. After working out more volumes of *Tristram* there came a second London visit, and soon after visits to Paris, visits which resulted in the *Sentimental Journey*, and those delightful pages which seem all that can be conceived of a gentle felicity, pathos and humour of style. We must refer our readers to Mr. Fitzgerald's pages for a happy realization of the Shandean route, and some lively pictures of old Paris. Such a different Paris from any that we have ever seen—pomp and luxury in plenty, but a caked, crusted, gaunt, and squalid corrupt mass, all waiting to be blown into the most visible damnation the world has ever seen or known, in a year or two. It was a very interesting Paris too, to us at this moment only interesting, inasmuch as it seemed to offer to Sterne the same ovation he had received in his own metropolis. "*C'est Chevalier Shandy*," was the constant whisper wherever he moved. His utter oddity of appearance preceded it frequently by the question "*Qui le diable est cet homme-là ?*" Paris and France were the very temples for such a man as Sterne; yet there are some little hints which show that he *could* blend some serious truth with his life of mere pleasantries. The society in which he moved was for the most part entirely atheistic, and there is a story told of him, that when dining at the house of the well-known Baron D'Holbach, he remarked he had never seen an atheist, and did not believe that one existed. "You have been unfortunate," replied the Baron, "you now see seventeen at table for the first time"—a pretty company! On another occasion a lady, Madame de Vence, a descendant of Madame de Sevigné, placed Mr. Sterne on the sofa by her side to discuss religion, expressing her opinion that she believed nothing, that she too was an atheist. "There are three epochs," said Sterne, in one of his recent acute observations,

"in the empire of a Frenchwoman. She is coquette; then deist; then *dévot*. The empire during these is never lost; she only changes her subjects." Madame de Vence was only vibrating between her first and second. Yorick took her hand and mildly remonstrated with her. There was not a more dangerous thing in the world than for a beauty to be a deist. The restraints of religion and morality were the outworks which protected her. "We are not adamant," he continued, "and there is need of all restraint, till age in her own time steals in and lays them on us; but, my dearest lady," said I, kissing her hand, "it is too soon—too soon."

Mr. Sterne had the credit all over Paris of converting Madame de Vence; she told Diderôt and the Abbé Morellet, that

"in one-half hour he had said more for revealed religion than
"all their Encyclopædias had said against it."

We think Mr. Fitzgerald has certainly vindicated the character of Sterne from some charges which have been too flippantly preferred against him. He had that dangerous property, a too sensitive nature unaccompanied by those principles which make such sensitiveness holy and beautiful; but it may, perhaps, be believed that he never received much from human affection. The accusation of his treatment of his mother was simply a falsehood; it is difficult to conceive that he could ever have received much from such persons as his wife and daughter proved themselves, after his death, to be. The charges with reference to his momentary meanness towards his wife and daughter may be considered as quite satisfactorily disposed of. The story is very different here; his last thoughts were occupied by anxieties lest they should be anxious. Oh, but it is a sad unsatisfactory life! We pass over the well-known episode of Eliza. Here again we have an instance of diseased sentiment, but the evidence we think pretty abundantly testifies against the existence of delinquency to the extent that has usually been charged upon him. But as the last hours came round the wearied child of wit and fashion, gleams of strange truth and tenderness broke out. Mrs. Sterne had known of his intimacy with "Eliza," "the Brahmine," Mrs. Draper. Mrs. Sterne and Lydia were both at Avignon while he was dying in London. Both Mrs. Sterne and her daughter feared, and they had been told, that he intended to bequeath his daughter as a legacy to Mrs. Draper. The report led to these following tender words written to his daughter:—

"The subject of thy letter," wrote Mr. Sterne with some agitation, "has astonished me. She could know but little of my feelings to tell thee that I should bequeath thee as a legacy to Mrs. Draper." He then reassures her, and tells her how Mrs. James will watch over her—"the friend whom I have so often talked and wrote about; from her you will learn to be an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a sincere friend." He then alludes to the success of his book, "but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion—the want of health bows me down—this vile influenza—*be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it*, and shall be with you both the first of May; and if I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child, unless a quiet retreat and peace of mind can restore me."

Nothing can be more tenderly delicate than that hurried correction of himself, "*be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it*;" and the gentle way—almost artful—in which he goes on to prepare his daughter's mind for the worst. "If I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child. But I think, my Lydia, thy mother will survive

me—do not deject her spirits with thy affections on my account.” He sends them both a present of a necklace and buckles. “I am never alone,” he goes on, “the kindness of my friends is ever the same. *I wish, though, I had thee to nurse me; but I am deny’d that.* Write to me twice a week at least. God bless thee, my child; and believe me ever, ever thy affectionate father,
L. S.”

“If ever I revisit Coxwould.” No, he would never revisit Coxwould; he was lying neglected in London, deserted by all his fine friends—quite a broken-hearted, gasping man. On his death-bed his thought and tenderness especially flowed out for his child—his daughter—to Mrs. James he wrote the following tender, hurried note. No mock sentiment here:—

15th March, Tuesday.

“Your poor friend is scarce able to write—he has been at death’s door this week with a pleurisy—I was bled three times on Thursday, and blister’d on Friday—The physician says I am better—God knows, for I feel myself sadly wrong, and shall, if I recover, be a long while of gaining strength.—Before I have gone thro’ half this letter, I must stop to rest my weak hand above a dozen times—Mr. James was so good to call upon me yesterday. I felt emotions not to be described at the sight of him, and he overjoy’d me by talking a great deal of you.—Do, dear Mrs. James, entreat him to come to-morrow, or next day, for perhaps I have not many days, or hours, to live—I want to ask a favour of him, if I find myself worse—that I shall beg of you, if in this wrestling I come off conqueror—my spirits are fled—’tis a bad omen—do not weep, my dear Lady—your tears are too precious to shed for me—bottle them up, and may the cork never be drawn.—Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids.—If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemn’d—which my heart, not my head, betray’d me into. Should my child, my Lydia, want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom?—You are the only woman on earth I can depend upon for such a benevolent action.—I wrote to her a fortnight ago, and told her what, I trust, she will find in you—Mr. James will be a father to her—he will protect her from every insult, for he wears a sword which he has served his country with, and which he would know how to draw out of the scabbard in defence of innocence.—Commend me to him—as I now commend you to that Being who takes under his care the good and kind part of the world.—Adieu! all grateful thanks to you and Mr. James.

“Your poor affectionate friend,

“L. STERNE.”

He literally died utterly alone—deserted and entirely dependent on the hired offices of a lodging-house servant, and, it seems probable, was robbed immediately after death. Little or nothing is known of his last hours; in one of the fashionable

streets close by, a cluster of the great friends of the master humorist was assembled. There were the Dukes of Grafton and Buccleuch, the Earls of March and Ossory, and Hume and Garrick. Sterne's name was mentioned, and some one proposed to send the footman to enquire how he was. When he arrived at the door, the landlady either did not know, or did not care to tell him the latest news, but bade him go upstairs. He did so and entered the room just as the deserted man was expiring. From him the world has received the account of the last moments of that strange imperial master over our sensibilities of laughter and tears. It was the footman who saw that wasted arm raised as if to ward off something—it was he who heard that terrible word, "*Now it's come!*" He saw the frame relax and stiffen into death. That was his end—the poor, lonely, forsaken man, pity that he ever became famous!—pity that he ever left his little Yorkshire curacies where, in a way, as far as so utterly strange and unsolved a nature could be happy, he was happy! What did they think of it, those Dukes and Lords in Clifford Street? We suppose it is not in the nature of such persons to feel—probably not one glass of wine less was drunk. Horror and mystery waited round his death-bed; the dying man must have felt, while the woman was chafing his limbs to restore warmth, that, with the other hand she was robbing him of his golden shirt buttons, for it seems certain that in this way they were stolen. But mystery more horrible and heartless followed after his death. He died in the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square; a new cemetery had just been opened in connection with it near Tyburn—that graveyard is, we suppose, a heap of rubbish now—weeds, graves, staggering headstones, dirt, neglect. There he is supposed to lie, for thither the body of the great humorist was carried to be consigned to the earth. There was a single mourning coach and two gentlemen. Of all the Dukes, Earls, and Bishops who pranced before his sermons, these were all that followed him to the grave. One of these, Mr. James, the husband of the lady so tenderly entreated on his daughter's account, the other Mr. Beckett, his publisher. Even the bell did not toll for the funeral; it was an instance of shameful neglect; but the most horrible indignity remains behind. While the body was being consigned to the earth, there were eyes watching the grave; two nights after, the body was dug up by resurrection men, placed in a case, and sent to Cambridge. Mr. Collignon, the Professor of Anatomy, had nearly completed the dissection when an old friend of Mr. Sterne's came into the lecture room, recognised the familiar features, and fainted away on the spot.

Was not that a close to Yorick's strange career—those Shandean flights of humour? It seems that the mean funeral seemed to justify the resurrection rascals in their work. After a long time, a slight memorial was placed in the ground, but the grave itself could scarcely be identified, and the inscription memorializes rather the vanity of the men who erected the monument, than the man whose fame it was sought to perpetuate.

We have no space to analyze the work or spirit of this great master. Mr. Fitzgerald's volumes are the only monument hitherto erected to his memory, always excepting his own works, which, with their many faults, vices, and indelicacies, will hold an immortal place in the history, and among the treasures and conquests, of our language.

II.

ON THE SACRED POETRY OF EARLY EASTERN CHRISTENDOM.

FROM of old there stood a temple, founded on the acts and attributes of the Eternal, in which unmembered silence made up, as it were, a divine and passionless harmony, and where creature service intruded not to supplement the activity of self-revelation. In it God alone, as subject and object, within the circle of His own Tri-personality, exercised His qualities of wisdom and benevolence.

Thereafter awoke at His bidding hosts of careering worlds, striving humbly to utter forth the glory unapproached and uncomprehended, as they wheeled about the impassable vestibule, which is space illimitable, and Time began to mark out seasons by their orbits and intervals of revolution. Later, when Evil had appeared to cloud and to divide creation, arose, as now arise, from the lower heavens the hymns of approved and secure angelic natures; the cries of horror from regions antipodal, whose inmates wailed beneath the load of a realised commination, and, latest of all, the voices of earth-born men contributing in prayers their proper part to the universal liturgy. Holding an inconstant mean between blessing and cursing, ascending now to the heights and anon swerving, with blind and maddened deflection, to the abyss, Earth has appropriated the service peculiar to each of the two extremes betwixt which she oscillates uncertain. In her happier and nobler moments she has shared by anticipation the peculiar service of

heaven, and in darker seasons, when the fate of severance from the good and the holy seemed imminent, that of the pit by a deprecation which was almost despair.

But oftener than the alternation of these extremes in earthly experience, has been their blending and inter-modification, just as a pendulum in motion fills the space of a fickle and agitated mean, twice as often as it occupies the right or the left limit of its journey.

The men who have celebrated in hymns the wondrous excellencies and powers of the Divine have, through the synchronous conviction of their own weakness and sinfulness, degraded, almost of necessity, to the less glorious occupation of prayer. Every ascription of praise has contained, at least implicitly, a supplication. And men again, who, setting out with a conviction of their own wants and sorrows, naturally breathed the language of prayer, have, under the instant consciousness of the majesty of the Being whose grace they supplicated, risen as naturally to the altitude of praise; and this so normally and universally that no prayer has even been reckoned complete which did not contain an invocation, the spirit, if not the form of which was strictly hymnic.

We had an opportunity of seeing, in a previous article, how the sacred muse of heathendom comported herself under the pressure of those circumstances of hope and fear to which she found herself obnoxious.

It is our more pleasing present duty to exhibit so much of the region which the baptised muse has covered as shall suffice for a companion picture; which, companion though it be, shall be as much a contrast to the former as the desert naked, and the desert rejoicing with the bloom and blossom of the rose. A glance at the earliest oriental hymns will be sufficient for this purpose without intruding on nearer ground,—ground at once of more recent and more frequent occupation.

It is singular, that not only in the hazy perceptions of right and wrong in the relations of the divine to the human, and in the scarcely-shaped yearnings after restoration from a fall, the effects of which were keenly felt, but even in the distortions of an apparently wanton ingenuity, we should trace something of anticipation or hope correlative to the purpose of Eternal Benevolence. Singular it is and seductive, although not here entitled to discussion, that theophanies and avatáras and incarnations should, with so much circumstantial minuteness, have been the constantly favoured means referred to God for benefiting the condition of the world. Singular, we repeat, but only mentioned here that we may the more gracefully take a

series of these national incarnations as an illustration of a universal fact. Vishnu, the Preserver of the Brahmanic triad, was incarnate in manifold shapes before he appeared in the form of Krishna, as the beautiful offspring of a virgin princess. In these earlier avatáras wherein he manifested himself as a fish, or a boar, or as some other inferior creature, he emitted only a portion of his godhead, reserving the exhibition of his entire divinity until he took shape and consistency as man. Now, all nature is the analogue of these lower manifestations. All nature is eloquent of God, but it is with the eloquence of music, not of articulation. It required a human form, human body and soul, to receive the Great Prophet and Interpreter of all heretofore only half-intelligible utterances, and to show forth the highest revelation of God for which we are to look in this small terrestrial corner of His dominion. A revelation of power and wisdom is at best only preparatory, is only a very partial revelation of character. Nature cannot bear the impress of the Divine seal, as of old the mind of man bore it in the golden age; nor indeed as it brokenly reflects it in these times of iron, the results of an alchemy read backwards. God dwells or finds the nearest approach to analogy in the thought and speech of man; which, if it cannot contain the boundless—in other words, be itself properly divine—is yet greater than all possible or conceivable limitations. The boast of Protagoras is half a truth: Man is negatively “the measure of the universe.”

Thus all the hymns that are addressed to God in nature are less than those that magnify the God who discovers himself in man, *i.e.*, in Christ, the God-with-us of Isaiah. The outer doctrine of providence and general benevolence yields to the Evangel of extraordinary and covenant-defined grace. We have uttered truisms, and yet how slow are men to believe what is so evident. They have found God represented in nature, and have so worshipped; and if Christians—and as such saved from the adoption of a formal fetishism or idolatry—they have, as slaves to a worthless induction,—worthless, we mean, as leading either to infinity or to love—seen God shadowed forth in trefoil, in the sun, or in an equilateral triangle. In the name of outraged logic how is this last—the fallacy is the same in all; we need only expose the beggarly sophistry of one—an emblem of the Trinity? Three sides or three angles and one, what—side or angle? Nay, but an altogether different quantity, a triangle! It is too much, we suppose, to ask at all times and from all persons for common sense; but we may kick such analogies aside, because they have not a common term. This is slightly wandering, we confess; but is not a

lashing due to such *Aids to Reflection*, such comprehensions of the Infinite made easy, if not of set purpose, then incidentally, as here? At any rate the digression is short, and we return.

What, we inquire, are the gains of this last revelation, and what hymnic features is it to originate or develop as contradistinguished from the sacred productions of the heathen muse? The remainder of our paper must be a running answer to this question. With the revelation of God in Christ were signalised His Infinity, Unity, and Personality; the declaration of these attributes as co-existent being, as our readers will apprehend if they will mentally dwell upon the characteristics of heathenism for a moment, the novel and distinctive glory of Christianity. Lest also the human temple, in which the Godhead was manifested, proving too strong an attraction for the ever gross and tangible tendencies of human worship, should usurp the adoration proper to the nature it enshrined, this was the era when the spirituality and the universality of the true worship were emphatically announced. Moreover, it was a gospel of love, of suffering unselfish and vicarious; a gospel which, in the poverty of Him who was the embodied Word of God, although neither refusing nor abusing the world, was the annunciation of the essential value of manhood above nature and above circumstance: a gospel which cast aside the cypress wreaths of intellect and crowned the heart; which recognised thought as the primal and ultimate action, and will as the subtlest form of deed; which proclaimed that we are chiefly that which we chiefly love or affect. Thus, in the momentous importance it attached to motive, it opened up a kingdom whose awful marches were to be guarded with a jealousy unknown to systems that were too gross to distinguish sin from crime. It was, further, what would have been strange alike to the Pythagorean and the Milesian, a denial of the innate incurable proclivity of matter, and the promise of a future two-fold glory, of soul and body. It was the message, more, it was the instance and example, of the resurrection. With the old subjects weeded, with those which it retained sublimated, and with new ones of a lofty glory introduced, we are now ready to examine the earliest notes of the one great still uncompleted anthem which the church militant has ever since in life and voice been raising. The progress of time has witnessed a progress of development; the changes of the world have occasioned changes of relationship between it and the church; faith has been narrow and intense, or larger and more diffuse; love has been concentrated and ardent, or more catholic and indiscriminating; objections and difficulties have shifted, disappeared, or returned in other

guises ; and through all, the changeful church has sung, and is singing, with trembling, with faltering, or with shouting, the praises of the Unchangeable.

Of the first days of the church, ere yet the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were withdrawn, we have no hymnic vestiges, except in so far as the productions of later days may have been formed upon them as models. Many of the occasions on which they were employed have been mentioned, but their object-matter has not been recorded. Of this class were those psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which, making melody in their hearts to the Lord, the Pauline disciples at Ephesus, at Colosse, and generally, were exhorted to give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This exhortation of the Apostle we find literally complied with in the second century, the care of Eusebius having preserved a fragment of that time, which states that, "what psalms and hymns soever were written by the brethren from the beginning, celebrate Christ, the Word of God, by asserting His divinity."† The preamble to the 'Tersanctus' is also founded scrupulously upon this article.

The first grand burst of feeling from the people who shared the Christian re-creation or recuperation—we adapt the word not from the transatlantic press or president, but from Calepinus the polyglot lexicographer—was emphatically a burst of praise. Taking this as differentiating their hymns from a great part of those of our own era, we readily find two or three explanatory considerations. Without marking these with the formality of ordinal numbers, we observe that the faith of those early times was more simple and direct, separated, as it was, by only a few removes from its object. The offence of the Cross once being surmounted, there was little to dread from the damping effects of a heartless hack criticism that impugned its historical accessories. The people of the earliest times had been called to the assumption of *new* privileges. They found themselves suddenly promoted to "an honour unto which they were not born." The salvation of Jesus rose on them as life did on Adam. Noon to them sprang at once resplendent from the dusky arms of midnight. Love hath, in some sort, suffered loss of freshness in transmission to us their descendants. We were born to the estate, and do not trace so readily what we owe. Sons of many Christian generations, taught to lisp of our great inheritance, our pristine beggary fades from before us, and retires almost too

* Eph. v., 19, 20. Coloss. iii., 16, 17.

† Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica*, v., 28.

far off for contrast. Nearer to heathenism, from which they were only just redeemed, and amongst which they lived, the earlier Christians had, however, a naturally less clear perception of many of the demands and of the scope of their religion than we who have well-nigh worn out the taint of pagan blood. The work of purity and the doctrines thereof, have, for instance, been of gradual recognition and development.

Experimental hymns were not at once of frequent occurrence. Conflicts and feelings were less celebrated; a curious introspection was less practised; there was little leisure to seek a Saviour from within. All hope was life-like and objective; external to the believers themselves, fixed upon Christ—hidden with Him in God. Persecutions—all but constant—drove them more closely to Christ. The sea of trouble was ever flooding upon them, and no ebb was in prospect; the Rock was the only refuge to which, always surrounded, but never covered, they clung. A quotation, will, we think, justify what we have said. The Church of England preserves, in her Communion Service, the earliest hymn extant. Often, marching to its rhythm, with its thoughts swelling in their hearts, and its words parting their lips, have martyrs gone to meet the death that came in fire to intermit their psalm of life and song. Worthy it is of chanting by men in whose faces, as before in the countenance of Stephen, the glory and radiance of angelhood were anticipated. We give two versions of it in Latin; the exquisite, rotund adaptability of which language as an *oratorical* and general religious vehicle, is a better apology for its retention by the Church of Rome than its assumed universality. The unlearned reader has only to find it in the English Prayer-Book; the learned may, if he please, find the Original Greek in Daniel's *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, and in the *Auswahl Altchristlicher Lieder, vom zweiten bis funfzehnten Jahrhundert* of Ferdinand Bässler.

HYMNUS ANGELICUS. 2

Gloria in supremis Deo,
 Et in terra pax:
 Erga homines benevolentia.
 Te celebramus,
 Te collaudamus,
 Te veneramur,
 Te illustramus,
 Tibi gratias habemus propter summam gloriam tuam,
 Domine Deus, Rex Cœli, Deus pater omnipotens,
 Domine Fili unigena, Jesu Christe, ,
 Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Patris Fili,
 Qui mundi peccata tollis, miserere nostrî.
 Qui mundi peccata tollis, utere tuâ erga nos clementiâ
 Qui mundi peccata tollis, admitte preces nostras

Qui sedes ad dexteram Dei Patris, miserere nostri.
 Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
 Tu solus Dominus,
 Tu solus, ô Christe,
 Cum spiritu sancto,
 Supremis es in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
 Et in terra pax, hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

Laudamus te,
 Benedicimus te,
 Adoramus te,
 Glorificamus te,

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam,
 Domine Deus rex cœlestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
 Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,
 Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, filius Patris,
 Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,
 Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram :
 Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis ;
 Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
 Tu solus dominus,
 Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe,
 Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei patris.

(Daniel.)

Amen.

The Author, and, indeed, the origin of the foregoing hymn, as also those of the 'Tersanctus,' likewise used in the Communion Service, are unknown. The superb 'Te Deum,' named 'Hymnus Ambrosianus' on the strength of an ancient legend, to the effect, that "it gushed forth in sudden inspiration from the lips of Ambrose as he baptized Augustine; or as it exists in another form, that St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, touched the same moment by the same sacred fire, sang it together in responses," is with the 'Tersanctus,' and the Angelical 'Doxology,' characterised as follows, by the author of *The Voice of Christian Life in Song*. The opinion, here restricted to the most ancient triad, is substantially identified with that we have just enumerated concerning early hymns in general. "In each of these three hymns, how exulting and triumphant the strain is! They are hymns of praise of the noblest kind; they are occupied, not with our feelings about the object of adoration, but with the object itself. Not a tone of sorrow mingles with them; the joy of the Redemption altogether overwhelms the lamentation of the Fall, mortality is swallowed up of life!"

Of this nature, it is lawful to suppose, were the hymns celebrating Christ as God, sung *ante lucem*, preventing the dawn, by the Christians of Pontus and Bithynia, during the proconsulship of the younger Pliny, whose famous letter to the Emperor Trajan, written about forty years after the death of St. Paul, may be regarded as the earliest of Christian apologies.

The 'Hymnus Angelicus,' although we have quoted it in Latin, belonged, until its appropriation by the Church Universally, by right of production to the Greek section of the same, and was by its members reckoned a Morning Hymn, ὕμνος ἑωθινός, having an Evening Hymn—ὕμνος ἑσπερινός, as its counterpart.

The latter is short, and in English as follows:—

EVENING HYMN.

Joyful light of holy glory,
Of the immortal Heavenly Father,
Holy, blessed
Jesu Christ,
We, coming at the setting of the sun,
Beholding the evening light,
Praise Father and Son,
And Holy Spirit, God.
Thee it is meet
At all hours to praise
With sacred voices, Son of God,
Thou who givest life;
Therefore the world glorifies Thee.

A few words with regard to the method of singing which prevailed amongst the earliest congregations may, not inaptly, be here introduced. The genius of Hebrew Poetry, delighting in parallelisms of contrast or of coincidence, demands, when once it becomes vocal, that it shall also become *responsive*. Whenever, therefore, it encourages to praise, the form allotted or indicated is always antiphonal. Deep is to cry to deep; rock to rock; day to day; night to night; earth is, with friendly assault, to scale heaven, and heaven to awaken earth. Psalms of triumph or adoration betray the assumption on the part of the author that a company on the one side and on the other are to provoke reciprocally to louder strain, or to sublimer worship. Such a practice was easy of adoption by the Eastern Churches, and to regard such adoption as matter of history is the most natural, though, at the same time, the most commonplace way of accounting for its obtaining among them. A more mystic explanation—first given by Socrates the Ecclesiastical historian—is that Ignatius of Antioch was once caught up in an ecstasy to hear the anthems of the angels, as in their "trinal triplicities" they answered "each other with voices of celestial sweetness throughout the plains of heaven. The church on earth wished to echo, as far as possible, the hymns of the church above, and thus, according to this historian at least, "antiphons were universally adopted."* To the Greek world

* Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book ii.

the practice would appear to have been unknown until the time of Flavian and Diodorus, for it was they who, transferring the practice of the Syrians of singing the Psalms of David alternately, seemed to the Greeks its originators. Socrates—and here we are afraid he is more trustworthy than in his statement of the Ignatian trance, just mentioned—gives an account of several bloody quarrels that arose out of this practice at Constantinople between the Arians (who all night long sang hymns alternately of heretical tendency) and the Athanasians. The Emperor, at length, put a stop to the practice. The following narrative of the doctrinal controversy carried on in the very remarkable manner of a series of deadly brawls, is taken *in extenso* from Socrates. The incidents occurred about the year 400:—

“ The Arians held their meetings without the city. As
 “ often, therefore, as the festal days occurred, that is to say,
 “ the Sabbath and Lord’s-day of each week, on which assemblies
 “ are usually held in the churches, they congregated within the
 “ city gates about the public piazzas, and sang responsive
 “ verses adapted to the Arian heresy. This they did during
 “ the greater part of the night: and again in the morning,
 “ chanting the same responsive compositions, they paraded
 “ through the midst of the city, and so passed out of the gates
 “ to go to their places of assembly. But since they incessantly
 “ made use of insulting expressions in relation to the Homoo-
 “ sians, often singing such words as these: ‘ Where are they
 “ that say three things are but one power?—John (the Bishop
 “ of Constantinople), fearing lest any of the more simple should
 “ be drawn away from the church by such kind of hymns,
 “ opposed to them some of his own people, that they also, em-
 “ ploying themselves in chanting nocturnal hymns, might ob-
 “ scure the effort of the Arians, and confirm his own party in
 “ the profession of their faith. John’s aim indeed seemed to
 “ be good, but it issued in tumult and danger. For, as the
 “ Homooousians performed their nocturnal hymns with greater
 “ display, John having invented silver crosses for them on
 “ which lighted wax-tapers were carried, provided at the ex-
 “ pense of the Empress Eudoxia, the Arians, who were very
 “ numerous, and fired with envy, resolved to revenge them-
 “ selves by a desperate attack upon their rivals. This they
 “ were the more ready to do from the remembrance of their
 “ own recent domination, and the contempt with which they
 “ regarded their adversaries. Without delay, therefore, on one
 “ of these nights, they assailed the Homooousians; when Briso,
 “ one of the eunuchs of the empress, who was leading the
 “ chanters of these hymns, was wounded by a stone in the

“forehead, and some of the people on both sides were killed. The emperor, incensed at this catastrophe, forbade the Arians to chant their hymns any more in public. We must, however, make some allusion to the origin of this custom, in the church, of singing hymns antiphonally. Ignatius, third bishop of Antioch, in Syria, from the Apostle Peter, who also had conversed familiarly with the apostles themselves, saw a vision of angels hymning, in alternate chants, the Holy Trinity: after which he introduced the mode of singing he had observed in the vision into the Antiochian Church, whence it was transmitted by tradition to all the other churches. Such is the account we have received in relation to these antiphonal hymns.”*

The consideration of minor methods and varieties, whether sayings, chantings, recitings, intonings, dear to the hearts of microscopic pedantic ecclesiastical antiquarians, we intend, with the kind permission of our readers, to reserve until, in our dotage, we make a pilgrimage to collect, as mementos of their valour, the carious teeth of the heroes of Thermopylæ.

Many anonymous hymns are still extant, and, as being of unknown authorship, are likewise of uncertain date. By noting these at the outset, we shall be more free to proceed methodically with those of which the writers are ascertained. In connection with them we wish to make one little truistic but still pregnant observation. Man is a compound being, and the subject of many conflicting influences. Things of a physical nature both within and external to himself qualify the vigour of his mind, the joy of his heart, the buoyancy and freedom of his spirit. Amongst such influences we recognise climate and the great natural phenomena by which he is surrounded. By these is his speculation characterized; by these determined the form of those heresies of intellect and of morals which are most likely to assail him. In the far East we have seen,† not apart from these influences, systems to arise that were the absolute denial of all existence; in India systems to be fostered that were objective to the extreme of denying any other than an illusive subject, the weight of Nature and her tropical forces bearing down all individual power and sense of being; in Greece and Asia Minor—and this clause is of instant application—where the balance of climate yielded a beauty that seduced to a contented delight in externals, we still notice a tendency to the outward and objective, until, advancing westward, we observe the subsidence of this

* Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book vi. ch. 8.

† Article “On the Sacred Poetry of Heathendom,” in the May number of the *Eclectic*, 1864.

feeling and the tendency of the Latin (Roman) to subjectivity; whilst further yet in the direction of the setting sun, and especially where a more northern aspect has given a climate and a soil that afford much to conquer, individuality is fortified, the subjective tendency developed, and philosophy exhibited as chiefly of the conditioned. This is a general statement—it is not difficult to apply it to religion, and to hymns the pulses and indices of religion. In the anonymous Greek hymns we find something of an equilibrium of the opposing forces we have indicated. In them the fields of the soul are seen to be fallow, with no earth-springing crops to wave between them and the heaven from which they expect, and drink in, fertility. There is little thought of self and God of a nature to separate between self and God. Consciousness of weakness and danger is compensated by a direct sense of the strength and love of the Friend, and God and Saviour. Several, are hymns having respect to the seasons of day and night; one morning hymn has been given, and there are, as we have shown, vesper counterparts of the same, in which the beauty of the Greek or Syrian evening is offered up naturally and without effort along with the adoration of the heart. We have not much space to spare for adjuncts of the imagination; but it is soothing to think of them being sung in some dwelling or sacred building whilst the lengthening shadows of vanishing day fell on the family or the congregation with scarce a passing glance at the twilight; or by shepherds—for many villages had by this time become Christian—who had just set the watch that was to be kept through the night on some palm-clad terrace, where the darkness was not gloom, or the nearness of the star-lit heaven forbade that silence should be mistaken for solitude. One of them, called “An Echo,” proper to be sung by a person waking abruptly in the night, has the solemnity and awe of darkness becomingly shed upon it.

AN ECHO.

Being raised up from sleep,
We fall before Thee, gracious One,
And we cry aloud the angels' hymn
To Thee, mighty One.
Holy, holy art Thou, O God,
For Thy mercy's sake have mercy upon us.

From the couch and from sleep,
Thou raisest me, O Lord!
Enlighten my mind and my heart,
And open Thou my lips,
That I may praise Thee, holy Trinity;
Holy, holy, holy art Thou.

The Judge will come with a great multitude,
And the deeds of each one shall be laid bare ;
But with fear we will cry in the midst of the night,
Holy, holy, holy art Thou.

Another is a tender summons to give a farewell greeting and to administer the "*Viaticum*" of *friendship* to a brother about, fearless, to leave the fellowship of earthly companions for the direct communion of God and the First born. "Sweet Thoughts, with repentance to Jesus," is more experimental, broken with gushing tears and heart-heaved sobs, showing a soul at bay with its own misery, yet looking outward to its Lord.

Most sweet Jesus, long-suffering Jesus,
Heal the wounds of my soul,
Jesus, and sweeten my heart ;
I pray Thee, most merciful Jesus, my Saviour,
That I, saved, may magnify Thee.

Hear me, my Saviour, lover of man,
Thy servant crying in affliction,
And deliver me, Jesus, from judgment,
And from punishment, only One, long-suffering,
Most sweet Jesus, only One, most merciful.

Receive Thy servant, my Saviour,
Falling before Thee with tears, my Saviour ;
And save Jesus, me repenting,
And from Hell, O Master, redeem me, Jesus ;

Heal, my Saviour, my soul
Of its wounds, Jesus, I pray Thee ;
And with Thine hand rescue me, my Saviour
Compassionate, from the soul-murderer, Satan, and save me.
I have sinned, my most sweet Saviour ;
Merciful, my Saviour, save me,
Fleeing to Thy defence, long-suffering Jesus,
And make me meet for Thy kingdom.

Thou, O Jesus, art the light of my mind ;
Thou art the salvation of my lost soul ;—
Thou, the Saviour, O Jesus, from punishment
And from hell deliver me, weeping like a helpless child,
Save, O Jesus, O my Christ, save me, miserable.

For the rest, most of the hymns of this series which are devoted to the celebration of events in the life of Jesus, dwell upon the incidents of his youth or earlier ministry ; birth, epiphany, baptism, rather than upon the later ones—though these are not entirely excluded—of his passion, resurrection and ascension : thus early indicating why the epiphany of Christ came to be the great festival of the oriental churches ; and thus, by giving prominence to those events in which his mother was necessarily a participator, innocently, yet none the less surely,

preparing for those degraded forms of religious feeling and opinion, which were afterwards to find vent and exposition in a Marian Te Deum.

It is incident to all men, as such, to conceive or to accept great thoughts: it is the prescription of genius to announce or to discover their relation. Nevertheless, the two greatest truths, each, to speak generally, separately discovered long before, the character of God and the ruined condition of man, it was beyond the powers of human kind to conciliate. Of the relations of these truths Christ came to be the incarnate exposition rather than the expounder, to *be* the Gospel rather than to be the preacher or declarer thereof. It was more important that the truth and love he came to act and to live should be enshrined in the affections and hearts of men, than that they should be formulized in systems of opinion. Christianity was not exclusively, or even chiefly, dogmatic. One comprehensive proposition which took the form of a postulate was necessary to its adoption. Assent was demanded to the fact that Christ was the Son of God. In this postulate was contained the germ of all orthodox creeds. Creeds were not so much chosen by the Church as forced upon it. Always the watchwords of battle, they were frequently, in addition—the change of figure is, we trust, venial—the fastnesses in which the Church stood the siege of heretics. As various schools of these arose, creeds condescended upon details which a more wholesome state of faith had not found necessary. The history of anti-Christian or heretical speculations, may be traced in the progress from the simplest form of belief to the elaborate formula of the creed known as the Athanasian. Hymns, in times when heresies prevailed, became *inclusive* creeds; that is, they became declarations of belief without explicit reference to the counter beliefs of gainsayers. An *exclusive* creed, which, besides defining its own articles, should have a tendency, ever so slightly pronounced, to the denunciation of anything contrary to them, is for obvious reasons, foreign to the idea of the hymn. It is not necessary, therefore, for us to enquire curiously—although the enquiry is in its own place of surpassing interest, and if we were treating of creeds we dare not touch it so lightly—what were the peculiar forms of heresy which, reacting on the sounder part of the Church, *articulated* and consolidated the doctrines we find expressed in such hymn-writers as Ephraem, Clement, and Gregory. Emphatically theirs were times when the church was called upon to abide by a position of protest; to add to external martyrdom the internal witness against secret enemies within her own bosom. The philosophies of the East and West

had come from their graves or their hiding-places to get themselves acknowledged by the Christian system ; or, failing that, to raise a hostile front against it, or lay a stealthy ambush. In the picture we aspire to paint we shall have occasion, with hymn-singing congregation or cloistered solitaire in the foreground, to render with accuracy the middle distance of orthodoxy, and with general, large, yet careful touches to show the haze or the mountain peak in the heretical background. We have first to see for a moment how the hymns of a Syrian monk and deacon stand forth against the dizzy heights of Gnosticism ; we shall, almost immediately, in speaking of Clement, look upon the whirlwind and the mist raised by the philosophical athletes of Alexandria, where the giant conceptions of Plato had been born anew, and dwarf-like, on the knees of Philo the Jew, who had also at length taught Moses, in his own despite, the conglomerated wisdom of Egypt and of Greece.

An aggregate of doctrines from Persia, Chaldæa, and Egypt, which, without any sound pretension to a systematic eclecticism, seemed to be a mere huddling together of units in order to keep themselves in life, had sprung up to challenge the attention of the world, by this time thoroughly *blasé* in the matter of philosophical speculation.

The professors of this desultory system, which was a little older than Christianity, had thought they recognised in the doctrine of the latter the reappearance of more venerable principles, which had had their remote origin in India. Under such sanction, Gnosticism, for by such name is the system generically known, had made great inroads upon the Christian world of the time, and especially had become prevalent amongst the Churches of Syria. It is doubtless the *antichrist* of St. John (1 John, iv., 1, 2, 3 ; 2 John, 7), the spirit of which had, so soon as the Apostolic times, began to work in many, and the mark of which was the denial that Jesus Christ had come *ἐν σαρκί*, *in the flesh*. Why we have italicised the last three words, will appear in the course of a sentence or two. In Gnosticism the intellect lorded it over the soul, and scorned the body to the extent of utter indifference. It was transcendental to all preceding or contemporaneous systems ; superior to all rites and symbols, whether of Heathenism or of the Mosaic dispensation ; and to the common notions and beliefs of Christianity. We do not now concern ourselves with the minute differences of its sections, or even with its grand divisions as determined and characterised by pantheism or dualism. We have to do with the idea and the doctrines therefrom deducible, common to most of its followers, of the irreclaimable

evil of matter, and especially of the human body as *hylic* or material. The vileness of the body was a corollary from the oriental doctrines which Gnosticism assimilated; and it followed that Christ, the son of God, could not have come *in the flesh*, could not have allied His nature to what was inherently and irredeemably depraved. The Divine "emanation" which was manifested under the form of Christ was not clothed in a real, but only in an illusive phantom body.

The effect of such a notion on ethical principles and on moral practices is not to seek. Sensuality was encouraged; the endeavour after Christian perfection in both kinds, of soul and body, was repudiated; guards and restraints were fitted only to the spiritual and *soulical* parts of humanity, and all checks were removed from the flesh, unrecognised as this last was as a possible vehicle of morality or immorality. The presentation of the body, upon which St. Paul insisted as a "holy, acceptable sacrifice, and reasonable service," was to the illuminated inadmissible and irrational. The letter of the law, whether positive or prohibitive, was only for the weak and the imperfect, who could not take in the prospect from the summit of the mount of vision. But "the true Gnostic, who was in possession of the "spiritual sense, rose to a virtue so sublime, that all distinctions "of good and evil, in external actions, disappeared to his eye. "This distinction was as the phantom of virtue, a spectre without "reality, which appeared in the night of the human mind, and "which vanished when, from the heights of science (gnosis) the "soul saw the light of the Pleroma" (prime source and ultimate receptacle) "dawn, and the divine day begin."*

Finally, with the introduction of a phantasmal body of Christ, vital or important doctrines of Christianity receded altogether. For there could, on this hypothesis, have been no true atonement or redemption; no *bonâ fide* death; and no resurrection or ascension of our nature, glorified in the person of the Saviour, to the right hand of the Father. Thus it was the overthrow of all the hopes, the basis of which St. Paul had so exultingly and elaborately laid in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. It was the merciless unfolding of that glorious transfiguration pageant, in which the corruptible was seen putting on incorruption, and the mortal clothing itself with immortality.

Of such kind was the system that threatened to corrode the heart of the Church, and to paralyse its extremities, when, in the fourth century, Ephraem Syrus arose in one of its local seats and strongholds, to sing with Apostolic verdure and

* Henry, *Epitome of History of Philosophy*.

freshness the hymns of Christ as God and babe, and God and man.

Ephraem the Syrian, who "was entitled to the highest honours, and was the greatest ornament of the Church," was born at Nisibis, or in its immediate neighbourhood, in the first year of the reign of the Emperor Constantine the Great. By force of natural genius and power of application, he attained an easy mastery over the most abstruse theorems of philosophy. "His style of writing was so replete with splendid oratory and sublimity of thought that he surpassed all the writers of Greece." To his singular honour it is asserted that his works carried undiminished into a Greek translation all the elegance, and nerve, and vigour of the original Syriac. Basil, bishop of the metropolis of Cappadocia, the most eloquent and learned man of his age, was accustomed to express his reverence and astonishment at the vastness of Ephraem's erudition. He is said to have written verses to the number of three hundred thousand.

"I am not ignorant," says Zozomen, from whom we are epitomizing our account of Ephraem, "that there were some very learned men who flourished in Osroene, as, for instance, Bardasanes, who originated a heresy designated by his name, and Harmonius, his son. It is related that this latter was deeply versed in Grecian erudition, and was the first to compose verses in his vernacular language; those verses he delivered to the choirs, and even now the Syrians frequently sing, not the precise verses written by Harmonius, but others of the same metre. For as Harmonius was not altogether free from the errors of his father, and entertained various opinions concerning the soul, the generation and destruction of the body, and the doctrine of transmigration, which are taught by the Greek philosophers, he introduced some of these sentiments in the lyrical songs which he composed. When Ephraem perceived that the Syrians were charmed with the elegant diction and melodious versification of Harmonius, he became apprehensive lest they should imbibe the same opinions; and therefore, although he was ignorant of Grecian learning, he applied himself to the study of the metres of Harmonius, and composed similar poems in accordance with the doctrines of the Church, and sacred hymns in praise of holy men. From that period the Syrians sang the odes of Ephraem, according to the method indicated by Harmonius. The execution of this work is alone sufficient to attest the natural endowments of Ephraem. He was as celebrated for the good actions he performed, as for the rigid

“course of discipline he pursued. He was particularly fond of
 “tranquillity. He was so serious and so careful to avoid
 “giving occasion to calumny, that he refrained from looking upon
 “woman. Although he was naturally prone to
 “passion, he never exhibited angry feeling towards any one
 “from the period of his embracing a monastic life.
 “His conduct on one occasion, shortly before his death, appears
 “to me so worthy of remembrance, that I shall record it here.
 “The city of Edessa being severely visited by famine, he
 “quitted the solitary cell in which he dwelt, and rebuked the
 “rich for permitting the poor to die around them, instead of
 “imparting to them of their superfluities; and he represented
 “to them that the wealth which they were treasuring up so
 “carefully would turn to their own condemnation, and to the
 “ruin of the soul, which is of more value than all the riches of
 “the earth. The rich men, convinced by his arguments,
 “replied, ‘We are not intent upon hoarding our wealth, but
 “we know of no one to whom we can confide the distribution
 “of our goods, for all are prone to seek after lucre, and to
 “betray the trust placed in them.’ ‘What think you of me?’
 “asked Ephraem. On their admitting that they considered
 “him an excellent and just man, and worthy of confidence, he
 “offered to undertake the distribution of their alms. As soon
 “as he received their money, he had about three hundred beds
 “fitted up in the public galleries, and here he tended those who
 “were ill and suffering from the effects of the famine, whether
 “they were foreigners or natives of the surrounding country.
 “On the cessation of the famine, he returned to the cell in
 “which he had previously dwelt; and, after the lapse of a few
 “days, he expired.

“He attained no higher clerical degree than that of deacon,
 “although his attainments in virtue rendered him equal in
 “reputation to those who rose to the highest sacerdotal dignity,
 “while his holy life and erudition made him an object of uni-
 “versal admiration.”*

It is not to be supposed that because the hymns of Ephraem
 Syrus are antithetic to the errors of Gnosticism, that they there-
 fore scorned to utilize any of the undoubtedly lofty conceptions
 of that system. But Ephraem reversed its process of subordi-
 nation, and giving the throne to Christianity, made the noblest
 ideas of Gnosticism its vassals and tributaries. For there is
 nothing truly great and good which cannot be amalgamated
 with Christianity, or identified with it. Every discovery of

* Zozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book iii. ch. 16.

law, for instance, is a stage or step in the revelation of which He was the object, who was the embodied Law, Wisdom, and System (Logos) of God. Again, what is not *a priori* and absurdly false, may claim to be recognised as poetically true. Thus Ephraem, apprehending philosophy, taught it religion; holding hard upon reason, baptized it into the faith of Jesus, conceiving the grand and the beautiful in poetry, presented its chastened phantasies within the temple of God. The contraries of his hymnic character are piquant and delightful; his massy strength and his simplicity; his faithfulness and his large-hearted charity; his monastic habits and his susceptibility to tender, domestic impressions. His life approached the ideal of the cloister—a seclusion in which he broke silence for the behoof of the outlying world and of posterity. He lived not to himself alone; nor to his God alone, but served also his own and other generations. Such a life is not utterly unlike that of a modern whose subtlest office is thought, and whose most palpable act is to invest that thought with popular symbols. In this the philosophical literary man is the monk of the present age; his highest life is lived alone, and his intercourse with the world is for the most part recreative, not exemplary. But he has not, as the monk, the necessity of a single life entailed upon him. For this celibacy shall we not say that Ephraem paid a heavy penalty in his inability to grasp fully those promises of Scripture which, being drawn from parental or filial relationships, are precisely those which above all others are endearing and assuring. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him”—an illustration which in the mouth of Christ was turned into an argument, and used *a fortiori*,—and kindred passages are weakened in their effect upon men who only know indirectly and by observation the yearning affection which is the standard of reference. Come we not here upon a clue which, with others that thread the monastic heart, leads on to the discovery of a state of mind in which awe overmasters love, and determines to gloom; in which God is regarded as a Judge, to the prejudice of his Fatherhood? We have been forced thus far at present into a subject that invites to still further discussion, because we recognise the sentiments, and, allowing for language, sometimes almost the expressions of the Mediæval “Dies Iræ,” in a hymn of a Syrian monk of the fourth century. But this is not the place to pursue the likeness. Comparisons—coincidences or contrasts—ought to be reminiscent not anticipative.

The awful monk rejoices in that prayer meets with instantaneousness of answer; delights in the infancy of the Saviour.

—we are on the point of indicating why we just now spoke of Christ as God and *Babe*—and joyously shouts hosannah with the hosannahs of children. Christ the child; mankind the children; how dear to his great, manly, childlike heart! The feeling is so thoroughly anti-Gnostic—for to the *illuminati* the intellectual feebleness of childhood must have been contemptible—that we cannot do better than quote a hymn which will expound it, and be at once typical of the man, of his place, and of his time. It alone presents doctrines which, if pressed logically to their issues, are found to involve of necessity the utter subversion of Gnosticism. It is much to say for so uncontroversial looking a composition. The original Syriac is perhaps of scarcely absorbing interest to the general reader. It may be consulted in Daniel's admirable repertory, the *Thesaurus*. With due gratitude we take advantage of a translation given in *The Voice of Christian Life in Song*:—

THE CHILDREN IN PARADISE.

To Thee, O God, be praises
From lips of babes and sucklings,
As in the heavenly meadows
Like spotless lambs they feed.

'Mid leafy trees they pasture,
Thus saith the blessed Spirit;
And Gabriel, prince of angels,
That happy flock doth lead.

The messengers of heaven,
With sons of light united,
In purest regions dwelling,
No curse or woe they see.

And at the resurrection,
With joy arise their bodies;
Their spirits know no bondage,
Their bodies now are free.

Brief here below their sojourn,
Their dwelling is in Eden,
And one bright day their parents
Hope yet with them to be.

We have lingered thus long with Ephraem the Syrian monk, for whose sake we have done violence to the strict requirements of chronology, because, in the first place, it seemed graceful to impute to the individual the antiquity of his nation, and in the second, because he is taken as sole representative of a section of the Church catholic, to the hymns of which, with the following quotation, we bid farewell. In a lyrico-dramatic poem upon the Epiphany, Ephraem puts this doxology into the "glowing heart" and mouth of Anna:—

O, Son of the King!
 Though thy birthplace was mean;
 All-hearing, yet silent,
 All-seeing, unseen;
 Unknown, yet all-knowing,
 God, and yet Son of Man!
 Praise to Thy name.

At a meeting of the Gospel Propagation Society, held at Liverpool four or five years ago, Sir James Brooke bore this testimony in regard to Christian activity in the *in partibus* diocese of Labuan: "Exactly in the same proportion as the Christian has been earnest, the Mahomedan has been made earnest too. When there were only half-a-dozen Christians in the country, when their devotions were necessarily in their own houses and in private, there was no Mahomedan mosque at all. You never saw a Mahomedan say his prayers; but directly our Church arose, and the bell rang to give warning that service-time was come, directly our services were attended upon, up started Mahomedan mosques; five times a day did the Mahomedan pray, and the large drum on which they beat at service time was sounded." An effect how little suspected; yet when experience has demonstrated it, how thoroughly intelligible! The first result of earnestness in one system is to stir up earnestness in others. The history of all such movements must be first parallelism (before the *specific* quality of the *genus* earnestness has declared itself); secondly, sooner or later, conflict; and finally, the mastery of the situation left without cavil to the strongest. The experience of Rajah Brooke need not to have been so startling; for it is merely a leaf over again of an old world chapter. The earliest voice of Christianity was as an angel's trump to quicken all the pulses of the world, to stir them up to an intermitted activity long ere it was powerful enough to give such activity direction. As corpses start up glowering and reproachful at the touch of science, so started up at the touch of Christianity the defunct or moribund philosophies. The resurrection-ground of these departed ones, the sanitarium of these diseased ones, was Alexandria, famous in all ages since its foundation for its admixture of races and of opinions, famous especially, from the second century to the fifth, for the *lingua franca* of its philosophers, as now, amongst lesser commercial glories, famous for the polyglot attainments of its donkey-boys.

In Alexandria were held the adjourned sessions of all the learned, whether of India, Persia, Chaldæa, Egypt, Miletus, Athens, Magna Græcia, or Cyrene. Pantheist, Dualist, Gnostic, Jewish Cabalist, Syrian Mystic, Moralist, Dialectician, Epicurean,

Bastard Platonist, here harlequinaded in motley garbs the several articles of which were filched from the wardrobe of their neighbours. Here men to whom Nothing and Silence were divine, whose cold abstraction put away everything save the immaterial, jostled with others to whose fervid fancies even the void unphenomenal wastes of space were populous with genii. Here the physicist, who forswore the spiritual, and materialised the gods, even then removing them from the earth as far as the Infinite Poles, encountered the idealist, who gave a soul indifferently to the world, to a cuttle-fish, or to the Sphinx then flourishing up the Nile, illustrious with undilapidated nose.

We adverted, a page or two ago, to the haze and whirlwind raised by these philosophical athletes; in mist and whirlwind we leave them. To define or to systematize, or to give an orderly account of the unmingled elements thereof, were worthy the powers of beatified Thessalian witches. As on the low, flat shores of the Bay of Alexandria lay secure the tideless, blue Mediterranean, though sands washed up to defile its skirts and fringes, and ever and again the lightly-kneaded soil invaded its purity with unresting clouds, so lay within that busy city the figured lake of Christianity, quiet and fresh at its great, deep heart, though its shallows were ruffled and tainted by sand and dust-cloud from the quick, tumultuous shore.

The foregoing sentence, which illustrates the adulteration or contamination that Alexandrian Christianity suffered generally, may be specially applied and typically, to Clement, the first known hymn writer, who, living in the last years of the second and the first of the third century, died A.D. 217. We must be pardoned for going back. We took Ephraem of Mesopotamia first, because he was his own series; whilst Clement is simply the first of a series to which he belongs. In his time the forces we have mentioned, though they were not all in full vigour and maturity, were yet potentially concealed in stem or bud, or blossom. Clement was born of Pagan parents, and before finding peace in the teaching of Christ under Pantænus—afterwards an Indian missionary—he had successively proved the unsatisfactory promise of many plausible systems. Wandering, seeking rest and finding none, he had acquired, to fling aside one after the other, the several lores of Ionia, Cælo-Syria, Chaldæa, and Palestine. Repudiating in turn the varied systems of these districts, his divorce from each had been rather of fact, than of recollection. Their atmosphere still lingered about his Christianity. They “had formed part, not merely of “the catalogue of his acquirements, but of the experience of his “heart. In these respects he had some of the qualifications of

"St. Paul. But the flood of Christian truth had not rushed with such force through his mind as to sweep away all remains of falsehood, leaving, as with St. Paul, only the sympathy of memory with those in error." He did not persistently and equally subordinate theory and reason to revelation and to faith.

Considering how he had been tossed, not undamaged, in many storms, we find an inexpressible pathos in those epithets which he has somewhat quaintly heaped together in his "Hymn of the Saviour Christ." To the author of such a hymn Christ must have been the "All in All." To him, voicing its child-like dependence and trust, there was nothing which he was to himself, and nothing which Christ was not.

Mouth of babes who cannot speak,
Wing of nestlings who cannot fly,
Sure guide of babes,
Shepherd of royal sheep,
Gather thine own
Artless children
To praise in holiness,
To sing in guilelessness,
With blameless lips,
Thee, O Christ, guide of children.
Christ, King of Saints,
All-governing Word
Of the highest Father,
Chief of Wisdom,
Support of toil,
Ever rejoicing,
Of mortal race,
Saviour, Jesus!
Shepherd, husbandman,
Helm, rein.
* * *
Lead, O Shepherd
Of reasoning sheep,
Holy one, lead,
King of speechless children.

That this hymn is obnoxious to the charge of rhapsody is, in the case of such a man, a valuable guarantee that it was inscribed from the interjectional, gushing fulness of his heart. The expert of all philosophies sobs as a voiceless babe! It is not lawful now to weep with him; let us rather appropriate his travail, and for it thank the Father of All.

To Ephraem, singing alone in a Syrian monastery, and to Clement, striking the key-note of a long oratorio, we owed it to individualize them. Our general method must for the shortening future be less biographic; must, at least, after we have mentioned

the name of Gregory of Nazianzen, hymnic expositor of illustrious doctors, and representative of new intricacies and difficulties.

Although the systems with which heathen and antichristian (gnostic) modes of thinking had been incorporated, were, to a great extent, broken up by the might of Christianity, yet the modes of thinking themselves survived in other forms. Antagonistic ideas *without* the Church became heretical dogmas *within*. The general doctrines of emanations, when applied to Christ, caused him to be considered as inferior to the Father, and hence Arianism; and when further applied to the third Person of the Trinity, evolved heretical teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. The dualistic theory, baptizing itself, corrupted the doctrine of the Fall. The Dualists proper had divided the personal Unity of the Creator into two principles; the Nestorians—not yet marshalled under the name—although not consciously or *ab initio* dualistic, similarly “divided the personal “Unity of the Redeemer into two persons.”

Arianism, Apollinarianism, and the thousand and one heresies which prevailed, and which Irenæus, Augustine, and other orthodox doctors confronted, were yet busy in disturbing and defiling the Church. So intolerable to men of purer doctrine were the divisions and tumults of the times that Gregory of Nazianzen (born A.D. 330) declared that the outward attacks of the apostate Julian were a rest compared with the bitter inward strife of sects and heresies. Of old, the heathen unbelief that surrounded them, had only made the Christians cling brother-like to their common hope, and by this men knew them, “that “they had loved one another.”

The partial or false beliefs of *quasi* Christians were now forcing the sounder part of their community to divisive *symbola* and standards. Christendom was tossed by chopping seas, and assailed by winds that boxed the compass. The time had come to build an ark of refuge and offence; such an one had in the early life of Gregory been built, and called the Nicene Creed.

In such circumstances of the Church, an intense temperamental love of peace, and a high ideal of personal holiness led Gregory to foster an ardent passion for solitude. He and his friend Basil had early planned a life of seclusion; but to Gregory such a life was, for the most part, disallowed by more powerful considerations. He was called by filial and other paramount claims of duty to be the associate of his father in the Cappadocian diocese of Nazianzen. In an interval of repose he visited Basil, who had taken up his lonely residence in a mountain solitude of Pontus. There the two together, for a season, used to

alternate their primitive rustic employments with psalms and hymns, and prayers and vigils.

“Whoever,” says Socrates, “compares Basil and Gregory with one another, and considers the life, morals, and virtues of each, will find it difficult to decide to which of them he ought to assign the pre-eminence: so equally did they both appear to excel, whether you regard the rectitude of their conduct, or their deep acquaintance with Greek literature and the sacred Scriptures. In their youth they were pupils at Athens of Himerius and Prohæresius, the most celebrated sophists of that age (about the middle of the fourth century): subsequently they frequented the School of Libanius at Antioch in Syria, where they became highly accomplished in rhetoric. Their proficiency induced many of their friends to recommend them to teach eloquence as a profession; others persuaded them to practise the law; but, despising both these pursuits, they abandoned their former studies, and embraced the monastic life. Having had some slight taste of philosophical science from him who then taught it at Antioch, they procured Origen’s works, and drew from them the right interpretation of the sacred Scriptures; and after a careful perusal of the writings of that great man, whose fame was at that time celebrated throughout the world, they contended against the Arians with manifest advantage.”* Eunomius, at that time the Arian champion, and others of approved eloquence, seemed in comparison with their opponents, Gregory and Basil, to be mere ignorant and illiterate cavillers. After having been admitted to the diaconate by Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, Basil, whom we have before mentioned as an admirer of Ephraem Syrus, was finally elevated to the bishopric of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, which was his native country. Upon his appointment he hastened to his diocese, anxious to prevent or anticipate the arrival, in the provinces of Pontus, of the Arian infection.

From the seclusion of Pontus, Gregory was recalled by the faithful affection of a son to his aged parents to the busy arena of ecclesiastical warfare. He succeeded his father as bishop of Nazianzen, a small city of Cappadocia, and diligently “went through the various cities, strengthening the weak, and establishing the feeble-minded. To Constantinople in particular he paid frequent visits, and by his ministrations there, so comforted and assured the orthodox believers, that a short time after, by the suffrage of many bishops, he was invested with the prelacy of that city.”†

* Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book iv. ch. 26.

† Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book iv. ch. 26.

During his earlier visits to Constantinople, whither he went to stem the tide of Arianism, he was insulted grossly by the mob, more cuttingly by the higher classes, and persecuted by all. Nevertheless, by his patience, his zeal and fidelity, he converted the "small oratory" in which, immediately after his translation, he had been obliged to hold his assemblies, into a magnificent church, built for him by the Emperor Theodosius, and named by the glad name of *Anastasia*. "But Gregory, " who far excelled in excellence and piety all those of the age in " which he lived, understanding that some murmured at his " preferment because he was a stranger, after expressing his " joy at the Emperor's arrival, refused to remain at Constan- " tinople."*

Having renounced his see, he prepared to return to his native Nazianzen, and there lived to enjoy eight years of peaceful retirement. It was through the labours, the conflicts, and the perplexities of a life like this—difficulties which have been indicated rather than described—that Gregory produced his sacred poems. And yet, truly, considering him as a hymn writer, his chequered life was by no means unpropitious. For the best poet, all other things being equal, will be the one who has had the greatest experience of extremes; and who, in his reminiscent times of balance, devotes himself to depicting them. Memory is, not for nothing, in old Greek story, the mother of the muses. We recognise in the hymns of Gregory expressions that had just been settled, or were then in process of settling, as the result of controversy. Upon his shield, more than upon the shields of Ephraem and Clement, we detect the dents of the adversary. His hymns are, if we might introduce an arbitrary *grammatical* distinction—one, that is, of gender, not of sex—the feminine to the masculine of the Nicene creed. He delights in singing to Christ not alone absolutely, but with direct and reiterated reference to him as co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. Christ is the Eternal Lord, King, Master, by whom and to whom and for whom are all things. We pass over the hymns distinguished by such characteristics, however, that we may present a few stanzas from a poem, *Πρὸς ἑαυτόν*, *To Himself*, which is at once a dirge and a pæan, the utter distress, the agonised prostration of humanity, and yet its very apotheosis. Thus can Gregory "the aged," when the fresh flowers of youth and glory are gone, bodily vigour dissipated, worldly possessions alienated; parents, brother, sister, in the grave,—thus, we say, can Gregory,—

* Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book v. ch. 7.

Of all bereft,
Exiled, and homeless, childless, aged, poor,

mourn and triumph, weep and yet be exceeding glad. Did
ever dying swan more sadly, sweetly sing; or gorgeous Psyche,
on unprisoned wing, more blithely flutter?—

What lies before me? Where shall set my day?
Where shall these weary limbs at length repose?
What hospitable tomb receive my clay?
What hands at last my failing eyes shall close?
What eyes will watch me?—eyes with pity fraught?
Some friend of Christ? or those who know him not?

Or shall no tomb, as in a casket, lock
This frame, when laid a weight of breathless clay?
Cast forth unburied on the desert rock,
Or thrown in scorn to birds and beasts of prey;
Consumed and cast in handfuls on the air,
Left in some river-bed to perish there?

This as Thou wilt, the Day will all unite
Wherever scattered, when Thy word is said:
Rivers of fire, abysses without light,
Thy great tribunal, these alone are dread.
And Thou, O Christ, my King, art fatherland to me,
Strength, wealth, eternal rest, yea, all I find in Thee!

We have, by this time, uncovered the relics of Christian lays
too ancient for ascertained authorship, when all was praise, and
faith had suffered nought in vigour or in quantity at the rude,
too daring hands of reason. We have listened to the echoes of
the songs of the stout Syrian monk, who, in his large simplicity,
built up for himself a substantial lodge of plain Christian hopes
against Gnostic shadows and air castles. We have heard the
deep heart-uttered, sometimes scarcely articulate voice in which
Clement sought to realize the presence of one like to the Son of
Man standing by him, when in the furnace the *smell* of fire
passed on him; or when, in a *mélée*, forgetting the sword, he
yet quenched the fiery darts of hostile comers with the shield.
And, lastly, we have heard almost the final song of Gregory
emeritus, who had not only waged a war against open, and, in so
far, chivalrous foes, but guarded himself against more subtle
poison-cup and circumvention. Such is our progress: faith-
carols from nameless saintly voices of the Christian dawn;
simple melodies which Syrian *illuminati* failed to make to jar,
from Ephraem; rhythmic watchwords against Gnostic and every
semi-pagan philosophy from Alexandria; shibboleths of creed
and hymn against half-caste heresies, from Nice and Nazianzen.
The *nobilis fons* of oriental Christian song, not licked up by the

strange fires of Islam, flowed yet for many centuries, yet gave not forth its streams so pure, nor found so pure a channel. We shall not give any of the hymns themselves; and shall not, therefore, make critical comparison of the writers. In many instances, this would indeed be impossible, for many are the hymns which come down *adespotoi*, unclaimed, without a master, from the troublous days that fell between the fourth and ninth centuries. Of the hymnographers, those most kindly known to fame are perhaps Synesius, who, amongst other flowers of his packed and condensed style, calls God the "Unity of Unities," "the root of roots, the idea of ideas, the world of worlds;" Cosmas of Jerusalem, whose hymns "march solemnly, as if in battle array," halting at intervals for chorus; John of Damascus, and Andrew of Crete. With the cheerful exhortation that terminates the communion hymn, εἰς τὴν μετάληψιν, of Simeon Metaphrastes, we close our notice of early eastern sacred poetry.

καὶ τὰδε θυμῶς ἐκ ψυχῆς θεῷ λέγε·

Δόξα σοι, ὁ θεός.

Δόξα σοι, ὁ θεός.

Δόξα σοι, ὁ θεός.

Thus raise your voice with heart and soul:

Glory, O God, to Thee;

Glory, O God, to Thee;

Glory to Thee!

III.

PHILLIMORE'S GEORGE III.

"THE Vituperative History of England, by George Bullymore;" such, according to a lady friend, ought to be the title of this remarkable book. Indeed, the English have seldom, if ever, been spoken of by an English writer in the style adopted by the Reader of History at Lincoln's Inn. He says a great deal more unkind things than even M. Assolant thought proper to fabricate about us. Still there is a wide difference between the two: the Frenchman is simply insulting, putting down through inexcusable carelessness things which the smallest amount of research would have shown to be untrue, and giving vent to spleen which a guest (even if he does not belong to the most polite of nations) is bound to keep in check so long as he is

among strangers. Mr. Phillimore on the other hand, is telling his own countrymen unpleasant truths (mingled, let us hope, with very unpleasant exaggerations) for their good, as he solemnly assures us; and, therefore, though he does it in an exceedingly unpleasant manner, we are bound to give him a patient hearing and to see what good we can gain from his strictures. He is doing what has often been done before—intensifying, it may be unconsciously, but certainly intensifying the dark shadows in the national history and character in order to point a moral. Thus it was that Tacitus wrote, blackening the Romans, describing by way of contrast the perfect morality of the ideal savages whom he places among the woods and swamps of Germany. Thus it was that more than one annalist wrote lives of the Emperors, from which we should get about as true a notion of those sovereigns as Wilkes's libels would enable us to form of George III. These men wrote, doubtless, with the good aim of improving their countrymen by showing them how very ugly their portrait looked with just the slightest—not distortion in the outline, but over-deepening of the shadows. And they have had their reward: for ages they have been accounted faithful narrators of the crimes of abominations of the Cæsars; only one here and there, like Hazlitt years ago, and Mr. Merivale just lately, has dared to make allowance for rhetorical colouring. Mr. Phillimore, unfortunately for him, has fallen on more faithless days, days when a reputation is scarcely to be won by wholesale fault-finding. Somehow John Bull, who has (we all know) an interminable license for grumbling, likes to do all the grumbling himself. He objects to have it done for him even in a newspaper. The *Morning Star* is not so much out of favour because it is the uncompromising supporter of the Federals (other papers are so too, the *Spectator* among the number), as because it fearlessly and habitually exposes the weak side of our policy, the sin of our New Zealand war, the reckless and aimless interference which causes so much misery in China, the bullying spirit which falls foul of poor Brazil, and so forth. Therefore it is called "un-English," therefore it is stigmatized as "a hireling print," therefore pious fathers of families refuse to admit it into their houses. Still less can Mr. Phillimore hope that such a novel view of English History as that which he presents will be acceptable in the form of a volume professing to take rank as a standard work. And we cannot pity him: even if all he said were fully true instead of being often one-sided we should object to his bitter tone. "Scold, scold, scold," never did good yet either to child or grown man. It is indeed much to be desired that some power

“ Wad the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us ;”

But still we say that his eyes do not see straight to whom the English, the least æsthetic, the most blundering, perhaps the most obstinate, but still, in many ways, the *greatest* people on the face of the earth, seem so bad that he can find no better terms than these wherein to describe them : “ So selfish and rude a
“ people, whom nothing but their excellent form of government
“ vivified, and saved from the uniform lethargic servitude which
“ still degrades a kindred race in Germany. * * * Though
“ possessed of many useful qualities they are neither quick-
“ witted, nor far-seeing, nor large-minded. They have no idea
“ of grandeur. No people degenerate more rapidly, or require
“ the standard which they should aim at to be more constantly
“ before their eyes. Provided they hear certain sounds repeated
“ and see certain forms observed, they surrender implicitly the
“ reality which those sounds were meant to signify. Unless
“ refined by careful education, even in the highest rank, and
“ the softer sex, they are narrow-minded, rough and trivial—
“ distrusting all that is great, detesting all that is extraordinary ;
“ yet when the example has once been set, rapidly passing
“ from blind hatred of what is foreign to the most servile and
“ indiscriminating imitation.” * * *

No doubt, to a considerable extent, our author's strictures,—those upon English law for instance, are deserved. He does not say harder things of it than Sir Samuel Romilly and Lord Brougham said long ago. No doubt our early dealings with India were as bad as anything could be. Has any one read, in Sir Walter Scott's *Surgeon's Daughter*, the account of how we treated our men on the voyage out ? But still two questions remain : first, was England then exceptionally bad ? next, how is it that despite her badness she stands where she now does among the nations ? To the first question we give unhesitatingly an answer in the negative. Look at Spain : we need not do more than look at a country where bigotry and idleness had almost eaten out the national life, where (except Cardinal Alberoni) there hardly appeared a man of talent during the reigns of our three first Georges. Look at Germany, offering the strangest spectacle which a *nation* has ever presented, prince-ridden and divided, substituting for the old religious wars a series of miserable dynastic struggles ; war, war, war—as if it were the normal state of man to be always in arms ; and, meanwhile no progress, no development of resources, half the population always at famine point, thousands yearly *sold away* to foreign service by the little despots who ruled them, no literature, no arts but music, not one redeeming

point except the poor remnant of something like religious freedom. Nor will the France of 1766 stand favourably in a comparison with England. The good of feudalism (whatever it may have been) had died out: chivalry and high feeling had given place to mere frivolity and organised sensuality; the church was as corrupt as any institution can be—we need not do more than mention Cardinal Dubois as one of its “shining lights;” and the people were in a state of misery and destitution, of which Arthur Young and others enable us to assert that Mr. Carlyle’s picture is not a whit exaggerated. It would be very easy to blacken other countries if doing so would at all help the cause of England in the eighteenth century. The fact is, it was a bad time all the world over. We can hardly help fancying that, just as sometimes the atmosphere of the whole earth seems vitiated—plagues begin in the East and move round in pitiless march from one hemisphere to the other, attacking all countries alike, falling upon healthy country districts no less than on crowded and filthy towns, even so there are periods when some moral miasma is let loose and works like a plague in men’s hearts, breeding selfishness, and hardness, and infidelity, and contempt of true justice and the rights of others. Such a time was this eighteenth century; wonderful, in that it was the mother of our own most wonderful age; pitiable in that it fell so grievously short of the grand purpose and glorious promise of the seventeenth. It was a time of general decay and reconstruction. Not in Europe only but over most of Asia, the same breaking up of the old established order is to be noticed. India was like an over-ripe ear of corn, dropping to pieces, before Clive or Dupleix ever began their evil strife.

This characteristic of the age is what Mr. Phillimore fails to grasp. He sees the faults of England a hundred years ago, and is to the full conscious of her misconduct; but, not recognizing the general temper of the time, he falls to bullying the English people for what certainly were not their shortcomings only.

But we have another question to reply to. Europe has almost wholly emerged from this enveloping cloud of moral evil which enwrapped her so closely. The healing process has been a severe one; and, in it, as in bodily cures, the “principle of selection” has told fearfully on the weaker peoples. France has passed through her ‘baptism of fire’ and come out young as the phoenix; England seems to have thriven by excessive taxation, corn laws, and the multifarious drain of a long and weary war. But Poland fell in the struggle of rival principles; Italy has not recovered from the tyrant’s long thralldom. Scandinavia (the great sufferer by the old “Black death”) fell,

during this moral plague, from its proud place, and has since remained divided and weak. Germany has made vast progress materially; but, morally, her Governments are more cruel and selfish and short-sighted than before. For each nation there was its own peculiar agent of regeneration. In the case of England we unhesitatingly affirm this to have been "the religious movement." We are Eclectics, and can see good in all forms of honest Christianity; and so in this term, "religious movement," we include all the awakenings—all the various calls to earnestness which have been heard through our land, from the first call of Wesley, startling the dull ear of besotted and cynical orthodoxy, to the latest whispers of Mr. Maurice, which rouse so many for whom charmers of any other form of creed would charm in vain though never so wisely. This is what has given new life to England; for it is a more earnest Christianity which has done for us what freedom did for the old Greeks,—led to excellence in every thing. The spirit which was serving the Lord has not been slothful in business. Future historians will recognize this more fully. When we are in the midst of the battle-strife we "see not our tokens;" but by-and-by we shall reflect that the men who rolled away our national Gilgal by cutting us off from the slave trade, the men who have been foremost in almost all works for ameliorating the condition of our people socially, morally, and intellectually, have been our "successful merchants," the men who were not afraid to try to make the best of both worlds." If we are a nation of shopkeepers, at any rate there never were such shopkeepers in the world before.

Now all this Mr. Phillimore does not see. By some strange fondness for hero-worship he is led to say that "the splendid virtues of a few eminent citizens, who kept their eyes firmly fixed on civil freedom as the end of all their struggles," have made the English great in spite of themselves; and thus he far too much ignores what has always been the great strength of England (as the want of it was the weakness of feudal France, and is the weakness of Poland and of several provinces of European Turkey), the existence of a *middle class*, rivalling the noblest in intelligence and almost always more eager for true freedom than any other class. There have, of course, been times when this great power has been in abeyance. It was awake all through Tudor times: by its help the eighth Harry was able to carry his sweeping changes in the teeth of fierce opposition from the nobles and the lower orders. Their support accounts for his popularity despite his ruthless cruelty to all whom he suspected of opposing him—for we must confess that they were then but a selfish set, and cared very little for "all the blood of all the

"Howards," though it was shed like water on every side, provided the nation was delivered from the crying corruptions of Rome. It rose grandly, this middle class, under the first two Stuarts; and then, strangely enough, as if paralysed by its gigantic efforts, it became, under Charles II., exceptionally quiescent, if not worse. The men who then kept the seed of English liberty alive were not, as before, the wealthy and thriving of the middle class, but the poor—the Covenanters in Scotland, and men like Bunyan in England. And here comes out the *strong feature* of this class of our society. Is it a beauty or a defect? Each will settle this for himself according to his own theory of life; but the fact remains that our middle class, the motive power of our nation, *moves slowly*, is satisfied with small results, and (while it never perhaps falls behind the great mass of the nation) is especially careful never to run on far ahead of them. To it are due our "improvements," for many of them could never have been attempted without it; yet, but for it, when once started, those improvements would often have been far less conservatively carried out. The class is far less go-ahead than its separate members. Of the grand men who battled and strove for the abolition of slavery, few, taken singly, could have been satisfied with a result which (while it removed the stigma from ourselves) certainly increased for a time the horrors of the middle passage. Collectively, they acquiesced thankfully in what was done. Members of the class are often enthusiasts; else great and noble works would not be so often begun amongst us; the class, as a whole, is never quixotic, else we should have more impossibilities attempted. The "reaction," as it is called, in Charles the Second's time, is a remarkable instance of this. There had been, during the Commonwealth, on the part of some sects at least, a clear expression of the noblest sentiments about religious liberty and universal toleration. The thing was not at all understood then by any of the ruling parties; the only men who taught it were poor creatures, not by any means "respectable," Dutch Anabaptists and the like; out of whom Laudian and Presbyterian and Independent agreed that no good thing could come. And so, partly through the meanness of its originators and partly through the political exigencies which prevented Cromwell from adopting it, true toleration was staved off—has, indeed, only just got free exercise among us: nay, so thoroughly was the question shelved, that the upper middle class all through Charles the Second's reign were pretty well content to leave things as they were—thought that as much had been done as the nation could bear; and left the Revolution of 1690 chiefly to the "great Whig houses." It is in the Georgian age,

that time of moral deadness, that this great middle class re-asserts its title to be the "moving force" of English progress. Quietly, during the incredible corruption of Walpole's time, and the imbecile wrong-headedness of Lord Bute, they were gaining moral courage—gaining position—gaining wealth, and all the essentials to lasting "success" in any great enterprise. And then, suddenly, the long evil dream of a French war being broken through, this power, matured in silence and comparative obscurity, stood forth as the chief power in England; and the abolition of the Test and Corporation Act, and Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform Bill, and a series of other like measures, soon attested its pre-eminence. It is this, and not the pre-eminence of a few very great men which has made our nation so passing great, the superiority—the nobleness—the wide views—the sterling honesty of our *average men*, untitled and unblest with office. When Mr. Phillimore asserts the reverse, all we can say is, that he is asserting a paradox more groundless *than any* of Mr. Froude's, though not so startling.

The class has grown in breadth of thought and grandeur of aim with the growth of the whole nation; but it has ever been (what it is now) the class which gives us Gladstones—theorists, enthusiasts, men who make Reform possible, who keep the heart of the nation warm; and, at the same time, the class which has, by its steady good sense and quiet endurance, hindered our falling into the excesses of French Propagandists and German Professors.

But this our great middle class is not faultless, and we are very grateful to Mr. Phillimore for pointing out some of these faults to us. We can go with him thoroughly in a great deal that he says; as for instance: "Though generally munificent and constitutionally stubborn, no people has ever surpassed the English in the worship of money, by whomsoever acquired, or of rank to whomsoever given. To the inequalities and slights of social life—of which all classes among them are prodigal towards those whom, for whatever reason, they consider their inferiors, and which more sensitive races resent as wounds far more cruel than any material suffering—they are indifferent, not from philosophy, but from want of perception. Their distinguishing moral defects are selfishness and respect for money. Their great moral qualities are fortitude and the love of truth." All this is very true: and this coarse-grained nature, for which we are often disposed to take credit to ourselves, calling it English *downrightness*, and the like, is the reason why, while we are the best colonists in an uninhabited land, we have always got on worse than most other

nations with aborigines, "subject races," thin-skinned Celts, and Maories, and the like. As our author says, at the opening of his chapter on Ireland, "we have a singular incapacity for "the government of other races and of foreign countries."

Now this, like so much more in his book, is a half truth. British India exemplifies at once its truth and its falsehood. No doubt our Government there has been often hard, unjust, oppressive, working for the interests of Leadenhall Street instead of for the good of Hindostan. Indeed, little that Mr. Phillimore brings against it in his chapter on India is exaggerated; scarcely any of his charges can be denied. Yet we at once say, "Look at the results. If Government is to aim at the greatest happiness of the greatest number, which has best succeeded, Spain in Peru or Mexico, France in Algeria, or England in India?" Other nations may be more genial, more ready to mix in every way with "natives," to take part in their little disputes, to become one with them; but in doing so they not seldom sink below the European standard of probity and truthfulness, they make life and property unsafe, and thus surely sap the foundations of prosperity. All our harshness, on the other hand—all our inaptitude to enter into other people's feelings (though they have doubtless greatly hindered our influence for good) have not been able to counter-balance the blessings which the governed have always appreciably received from our "*love of truth and justice*," our maintaining so high a standard in which is surely contradiction enough to Mr. Phillimore's statement that no nation degenerates so rapidly when out of the way of public opinion.

Does not the truth lie rather the other way? "Our American "cousins," most of them, "English brought up out of the way "of European public opinion," have many failings, but they have scarcely degenerated so rapidly as the colonists of many other nations. But then, it is undeniably true that we must either have a country to ourselves (as in Van Diemen's Land—*after extermination of the blacks*), or we must be not so much colonists as a governing army of occupation (as we are in India.) Where, as in Ireland, we are brought face to face with a race possibly inferior to us in some respects, at any rate differing very widely from us, and certainly too persistent and "European" to be "improved off the face of the earth," the result of our sullen determination always to practically ignore the truth which St. Paul taught to the men of Athens, becomes decidedly uncomfortable. It would have been as bad in Canada, had not the nearness of the States drawn all parties out there closely together. In spite of this, as late as Lord Durham's governor-

ship, at the state balls and receptions, the English took one side of the rooms, the Canadian-French the other.

As to the English law, we believe Mr. Phillimore is not a whit too severe in saying that "*in no free country* have considerations of private interest so uniformly triumphed over the dearest interests of the commonwealth; no where else have such enormous abuses been allowed to continue so long undressed; and, at last, when reform becomes inevitable, nowhere else are abuses, in spite of the misery they inflict on tens of thousands, touched with a more sparing and timidly parental hand." In support of this, he quotes the well-known instances: "*trial by battle*" was allowed in Court in 1820 (we believe a murderer escaped justice on this plea). As late as 1773, the law ordered women *to be burnt alive* for crimes for which men were hanged.* *Ecclesiastical Courts* have only just been abolished, though their tyranny and injustice did more than anything else to bring on the reformation. "Legal fictions" are visited, and deservedly, with our author's severest censure. The Court of Exchequer was, by several statutes, prohibited from holding plea of any civil matter. Yet the judges of that Court retained their usurped jurisdiction by *conniving at the complainant's false plea, that he was a debtor of the king*. So again, as to our old friends, *Doe and Roe*, "an action about land was one continued lie—false plaintiff, false defendant, sham letter—any mistake in the technical statement of these falsehoods, any violation of the formal rules by which they were supported, sometimes deprived the suitor of his right altogether—always inflicted on him great expense, and inevitable delay." The effect of all these clumsy fictions, not on the "legal mind" only, but on the moral tone of the people, cannot but have been bad. "The great object of jurisprudence ought to be to make technical mistakes impossible. The great object of our judges was to make them inevitable 'in order that,' (as Lord Hobart said), *the law* (i.e., '*pettifogging*') *might be an art*." In vain do we look for any single attempt on the part of the judges to remedy evils which every day must have been forced upon their notice. In vain do we listen for a single word to denote any sympathy with the public weal, any sense of the frightful sufferings which make the soul sick in their perusal, and to which so much of the crime they had to punish must be attributed. The *Lives of the Chancellors* sets forth the worst and most ignoble side of English character; its narrowness, its purblind adherence to

* The hangman generally strangled them first, but not always. *Vid. Annual Register for 1773.*

“forms of which the meaning is absolutely forgotten; its “indifference to others’ welfare, its slovenly neglect of what is “important, and minute attention to what is meaningless; “above all, its sordid respect for wealth, and abject deference “to authority.” This is strong language; yet no one can deny that at the accession of George III. English law was a disgrace to the nation, its chicane endless, its rules absurd, its punishments cruel and unavailing, and that the great lawyers (with the single exception of Lord Mansfield, who suffered for his liberal principles in the Lord George Gordon riots) steadily opposed any improvements whatever until the “pressure from without” became irresistible. But, after all, we knew this before; we can read it in books of every calibre, from Miller’s *Present State of the Civil Law*, to Mr. Dickens’s *Little Dorrit*. What we want in a HISTORY, (*i.e.*, as the word is now understood, “an inquiry”—the old Greek meaning again—but less into facts than into results depending on these facts) is not a collection of shocking anecdotes, showing the need of law reform, and making us feel as if the lawyers, following Henry the Fifth’s example, had led us into continual wars, in order to keep our eyes off the rottenness at home, but a measuring of the effect of these abuses on the national character, and (above all) some explanation of how it is that England is so great—in every way the foremost of the nations—despite her legal fictions and brutal criminal code. It is no doubt strange that up to 1812, *excommunication*, “a precursory judgment of the Latter Day,” as Lord Bacon called it, was inflicted for the recovery of a few shillings due to any pettifogger who chose to throw his case into a Bishop’s Court. Mr. Phillimore says, “the abuse lived so long because *it was for the interest of legal practitioners that it should last.*” We ask how is it that in a land where such laws lasted till yesterday, there is yet more solid freedom, more liberty of thought and action, than in any other part of the world? Freedom in America means more or less the will of the majority; freedom in France (purchased by all the blood and misery of ’93) means the impossibility of an elector meeting his constituents without subjecting himself to a domiciliary visit which forthwith disperses the little gathering. Look at London during Garibaldi’s visit; it showed a spectacle the world cannot reproduce—order, perfect order, while men of every party and every shade of thought were thronging to do homage to a great man—order maintained, not by national guards, or *gardes mobiles*, or parks of artillery conspicuously displayed, but by a few mounted police, working with the orderly will of a peaceful multitude. Mr. Phillimore and

facts combine to place us in a dilemma: the English people and their laws cannot both have been so bad after all, else we should not have such happy results nowadays. If the law was so depraving, the people who resisted its evil influence, and came out after all such as we now see them, must indeed have something surpassingly noble in their composition. This is, it seems to us, a better way of meeting our author than to run off (as the *Edinburgh* does) into abuse as vituperative as his own, and into weak comparisons to shew that French and Spanish and other laws were, in those days, quite as bad as our own.

We are willing, at any rate, to stand comparison with Frenchmen or Spaniards, or any people in the world to-day.

As to India, we believe the influence on our own people of this vast country has on the whole been good. Having India, we have grown to be really anxious to keep the peace in Europe. Besides, India has not only given us a vent for our over-abundant energy, it has educated a large class among us to firmness, to self-reliance, to all the virtues that are of necessity called forth by the circumstances of a military and civilian life in most parts of Hindostan. An old Indian officer will generally (despite exceptions and notwithstanding a very prevalent opinion to the contrary) contrast favourably in morals and in general intelligence with the general run of officers of the line. Of course, there were rampant and abominable evils at the commencement, and through the long and weary process of conquest. Mr. Phillimore says—"Our eastern empire is based on fraud and violence which are a disgrace to our character as a nation: it has been supported by foul crimes, from the deed forged by Clive to the scandalous annexation of Oude." And, though we do not quite endorse all this violent language, still we need not go to Mr. Phillimore for a condemnation of the arts by which "our Indian empire" was (we believe) not *founded*, according to the popular diction, but kept back in its growth; and that moral influence retarded, which we are beginning to exercise over so many millions who respect our justice and impartiality even if they do not love us, who rejoice in the excellence of our police and the quiet secured by our policy, even if they do not appreciate our laws. Any school history shows us that our early Indian governors did "put their trust in wrong and robbery," did "justify the wicked for reward," did everything which (had not the strong hand of the home government, and the strong influence of home *opinion*, set things right again and again) could not have failed to sap the foundations of our power. In any ordinary epitome we read how Warren Hastings, forced to bribe off the Mahrattas that he might

make head against Hyder Ali, had thereby exhausted the revenues of Madras; while "yet the Indian proprietors at home expected "large remittances." And, so Cheyte Sing Rajah of Benares, has £500,000 extorted from him for being a little late in paying his voluntary contribution of £50,000. Then follows the episode of the Begums, as bad as anything recorded of Themistocles, or even of any of those unscrupulous worthies who made Rome great at the price of their own honour. But it is all over now; and out of evil has come great and manifest good. And as to annexation; how can we help annexing? The wonder is that we should ever stop annexing, when we see the difference between an orderly state under English rule, and such a chaos as the government of Oude, for instance. Annexation in India is just like interference in China, indefensible on abstract principles, yet apparently the only salvation for countries pining away under a *régime* of which no Englishman who has not been in Turkey can form an idea. This is the only excuse we have to offer for our policy in the East, that we are accepting the work which Providence seems to have put into our hands. While working for our own advantage, promoting our trade, increasing our wealth, multiplying employment for the class for whom it is hardest to find employment—the poorer middle-class, we are also doing infinite good to millions of men who need a strong yet kindly hand to lead them on along the road of progress. If, as our author expresses it, "these eastern regions seem to have been intended by Providence as the seed-plots of refinement and humanity; if, while "England was inhabited by a few savages, struggling with "wolves and bears, and muttering some two or three scarcely "articulated sounds, there, a language of the most exquisitely "refined construction was spoken. . . . there were splendid "cities, hives of industry, full of stately edifices, and kept healthy "by vast reservoirs. . . . there the Mahometan conqueror had "atoned for his cruelty in war by his legislation in peace." If all this was ever true of India in any age, it certainly was not true of it during the period of weakness and miserable internal disruption which immediately preceded the age of European interference. What gave a handle to that interference, and what was the pretext for the earliest "annexations," but the purposeless quarrels between rival feudatories of the Mogul? If India ever was the paradise which Mr. Phillimore describes, it had certainly run sadly wild before Clive began his career, before Dupleix brooded over his dreams of conquest and empire.

Poor old "John Company" gets hard lines from our author:—
 "The annals of modern Europe, including the murders of Cæsar
 "Borgia and Henry VIII., the treatment of Hungary by

"Austria, and of Poland by the Russians, contain no record of such incessant treachery, of such cruel avarice, of such long persevering, deliberate, cold-blooded oppression, and such utter indifference to the welfare of millions, as are to be met with in the chronicles of our East India Company."

Of course, *our author* can give chapter and verse in support of this choice sample of his style; in fact, our government was for many years bad in the extreme:—"For sixty years after we were absolute masters of Bengal we did not open a single road;" this one wilful omission, so different from the example set by old Rome, so fatal to ourselves during the first pressure of the cotton famine, is enough to stamp our policy as simply selfish; and (though French authorities, by whom he supports his statements, are not exactly the most worthy of credit in regard to India) we have scarcely a word to say against Mr. Phillimore's strictures on our proceedings in Hindostan; we can do nothing but point to results, results which doubtless might have been much greater, but which still are promising, when we consider that for one nation to be governed by another, must always be an *imperfect* state of things,—so promising that, by His help who turneth the fierceness of man to His praise, we may hope for a bright future for India. Still, it is very hard to estimate the absolute good or harm done by any conquest of one nation by another, native development being always so inestimably superior to that due to the influence of the stranger. And, therefore, when we read about the old violence, the old injustice, the old restrictions which destroyed India's commerce, and broke the spirit of her people, we cannot help asking ourselves, has our rule really done more good than harm after all? We make corahs and bandannahs at Glasgow and elsewhere, we have beaten out of the market three or four native manufactures for the sake of accumulating in Lancashire an unhealthy overcrowded population, till within the last few years fearfully overworked and sadly uncared for. We force the ryot to grow us indigo and opium, to the prejudice of his grain crops, because they "suit our book" best, and we call this "developing the resources of the Indian peninsula." Is *good* the result of such a rule? or are we only exhibiting over again the crushing tyranny of Rome, which sapped the life of the subject nations, while it forced on them internal tranquillity and freedom from foreign wars? We have met Englishmen, men who knew India well, who denounce our whole Indian system,—look on it as hopelessly reducing all to the dead level of the money market. Such men would say that yonder wild Rajpoot, who lives in his hill-fort with his hereditary jester and perhaps his poet, and quietly puts his supernumerary

daughters in jars instead of letting them grow up to fill a cell in a convent, or to share a parlour in Bath, that "retreat of the "ten thousand,"—who takes black mail when he can, and has a feud of nine generations standing with half a dozen neighbouring little rajahs, is really a far finer fellow than your rich Calcutta Baboo, is worth, in fact, a score of such yellow six hundred per cent. ghoules. Whether the hill rajah is better than Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, of pious memory, or than any one out of half a hundred of the best Bombay parsees, may be more questionable. Besides, it may be doubtful how far the excellence of the parsees is not due to the free scope which we have given them.

It is a very difficult question this, as to the real influence of our occupation of India, has it been good or bad? Ten years hence, if railways are multiplied, and old tanks restored, and waste lands planted with coffee, it will be easier to answer it. We have already recorded our own answer: it is in favour of England even now, when so little has been done compared with what is promised; but we are not very confident in the rightness of our judgment; we often can scarcely help taking the other view, that our influence has been most mischievous,—perpetuating native quarrels, draining out the country's wealth, hindering reforms, making national development impossible. Certainly, as in Italy, under her foreign rulers, the monied class has to thank us for security and for good safe markets. When freedom was lost the Italians took to banking: the Bengalee does the same, and doubtless (though he never loves the swearing, ear-boxing, boot-flinging Englishman) he rejoices in the security (unknown to the Hindoo in any former age) which enables him to lend out his money safely on interest instead of having to hide it in the ruins of his house for fear some of the king's household should take a fancy to appropriate it.

To sum up; our rule in India has been marked by frightful abuses. We have taken ten millions a year out of the country; yet up to 1842 we had not even opened a well, dug a tank or a canal, or built a bridge. Our Government has been, as Colonel Cotton says, "*stupid and merciless.*" Had we made roads or even kept up the navigation of the rivers, we should have had a very different supply of cotton during the last few years. That is the dark side of the picture. The other side is, that we offer security for life and property, an integrity which can never be bribed, a justice which, by its earnest faithfulness in striving to decide truth fully, forms the greatest possible contrast to the hasty partial justice of our predecessors in rule. Add to this the increase in trade, and the now general awakening to the duty of carrying on "public

“works,” and we shall hesitate to subscribe to Mr. Phillimore’s verdict, “that the hand of the sharp English collector, anxious “to win the favour of his superiors by wringing the last penny “from the miserable cultivator, has left greater and more durable scars on the face of India than the sabre of the Affghan, “or the hoofs of the Mahratta cavalry. The native has found “the little finger of the East India director—inculcating “moderation and humanity in language fit for Socrates on one “page, and in the next demanding an exorbitant tribute, which “could only be extorted by actual torture—heavier than the “loins of his former rulers.” The language is exaggerated; and if it were not, it would hardly be wise to use it now that the English in India have really roused themselves to a sense of their responsibilities. Whatever mistakes a governor like Sir H. Lawrence may make will not be at any rate due to selfish disregard of the welfare of the governed.

Ireland, naturally enough, affords our author scope for much objectless vituperation. No possible good can result from raking up the smouldering embers of old hatreds.

Undoubtedly, a great deal of what he says is too true; but now that every sane man wants to see Ireland quiet and industrious, and therefore happy and prosperous, the wisdom of bringing all these old troubles forward is about as great as that so often shown by the *Times* in those wonderful leaders, in which all Celts are periodically denounced as hereditary “ne’er do weels,” whom it is hopeless to try to improve. It can do no good to drag to light the half-forgotten horrors of the penal laws, or the corrupt system under which the Duke of Bedford, as Viceroy, was able to fill the Irish Civil list with the names of female connections and profligate English politicians. It may be useful for us thoughtfully to reflect upon the judgment, often and often given by foreigners, but never before enunciated by an Englishman, “that the impediment to our success in Ireland is to be “found in the *singular incapacity of the English for the government of other races and of foreign countries*, rather than in the “character of a people falling below them in some important “and useful qualities, but equal and it may be superior to them “in others, when it has shaken off the slough of a barbarity so “long fostered by English influence. We console ourselves “for our mis-government of Ireland by abusing the Irish character, and of the Ionian islands by abusing the Greeks: and “when, as the allies of Spain, we had become as odious as the “French invader, we sought refuge for the consequences of our “own insolence by depreciating that high-spirited nation. “Shall we never learn that, superior as we are in some respects

“ to other countries, we are as much below them in others ; and
 “ that nations as well as individuals stand in need of reciprocal
 “ indulgence ? If the Spaniards have their bull fights, have
 “ we not our law and legislature ? our game laws ? our *congés*
 “ *d’élire* and convocation ? Have not our Bishops palaces ? and
 “ do not twenty-five of them sit in the House of Lords ? ”

Here, as usual, Mr. Phillimore begins well—lays his finger on the weak point of our national character, our immense self-esteem, which leads us to take credit to ourselves for the very things in which we are weakest : but he spoils the effect of his stricture by heaping together abuse from all quarters. One great want is, that nowhere in his book does he bring out in clear relief the *openness* which marks us in all our dealings at home and abroad. Of what goes on in countries under foreign rule, we are told little, and experience has taught us not to believe even half what we do hear. The slightest thing which happens in India, or the Cape, or New Zealand, is at once described and commented on and exaggerated by a score of independent correspondents ; and soon gets spread, exaggerations and all, from one end of Europe to the other. Mr. Phillimore does grant us the credit of “ *improving by education*, of desperate energy “ and deliberate valour, and of having nurtured a succession of “ great men, whose splendid virtues and lofty qualities have often “ been counteracted and neutralised by the gross propensities and “ selfish views of the many.” He also points out that the freedom of the press, the establishment of which was a gradual matter and cost many severe struggles, has been for much in the history of our own country’s greatness ; and he allows some weight (though surely not enough) to that love of religious freedom and earnestness in the cause of truth which has marked us all, high and low, for the last four hundred years. His notice of the rise of Methodism is singularly brief and unsatisfactory. He sets indeed prominently forward the shortcomings of the clergy during the leaden Georgian age, shortcomings so well summed up in Bp. Burnet’s words : “ I must say that the “ main body of our English clergy has always appeared dead and “ lifeless to me, and instead of animating one another, they “ seem rather to lay one another asleep.” But surely an historian who gives over eighty pages to India, and a long chapter to Ireland, might find room for more than a passing remark about the great religious fact of the eighteenth century. He says very truly, that “ Methodism owed its origin to the same “ powerful cause which made so many Romans stoics in the “ days of Nero ; which produced the *De imitatione Christi*, and “ the works breathing a spirit of ascetic devotion of Santa

“ Teresa and Thomas á Kempis, the ecstasies of Madame Guyon, “ and the mystic views of Fénelon, the school of Port Royal and “ Le Trappe, nay, the glowing illusions of chivalry and romance; “ — the struggle of the human mind against the prevailing evil, “ which presses upon and coils around it. As Bp. Berkeley “ said, a cold indifference for the national religion, indeed for all “ matters of faith and Divine worship, was thought good sense. “ The profound speculations of Clarke and Butler were not “ meant for colliers, down whose blackened cheeks the tears “ furrowed channels as they listened to Wesley, when he raised “ in them the consciousness that they too, whom no Anglican “ dignitary had ever condescended to address, were nevertheless “ less ‘of large discourse, looking before and after?’” Methodism was the natural reaction against the indifferentism of the clergy; but it was something else too, and we might have expected our historian, at least, to hint at what this *something else* was. But we must bid farewell to Mr. Phillimore. His work is *valuable*, for (as we said) it is always good for us to see our own weaknesses, and to be forced to note our own faults; but it might have been much more useful, had it been written in a more genial and less captious spirit. The Englishman, never the most patient of creatures, is apt to turn restive, when, “ for “ his good ” you begin by abusing him soundly.

Still the work is most instructive: we would strongly advise all who can read it to do so; they will find it at any rate entirely different from anything they ever read before.

IV.

ROBERT BROWNING'S NEW VOLUME.*

WE suppose we are not alone in making the confession that, of the living masters of English poetry, Robert Browning gives to us the greatest measure of delight. We are not careful to contest for him the chief place among his brethren, but we know not how to admit the right of any other to a higher. Before that discussion, however, could arise, or be settled, it would be necessary to define the chief properties demanded in the poet. In painfully anxious yearning after artistic and lyrical melody Browning is certainly transcended by his only possible rival, Tennyson. We do not meet the wonderfully happy artfulness of expression which seems not like a making

* *Dramatis Personæ.* By Robert Browning. Chapman and Hall.

but a happening; but this is the only feature in which he is transcended, and we are quite aware that many would prefer, in many instances we should ourselves greatly prefer, the more unwrought, the sometimes weird, and frequently awakening flash of mystical expression which wins more from the heart than the highest combination of mere music regarded as the arrangement of notes and tones. But it is in the converse with distant persons and scenes, and the making the ages and their histories, events and persons, vehicles for living instruction—it is in the exploring the profoundest recesses of human spirits—the loitering and the marvelling over, and seeking the solution of the most tough and knotty problems of human nature—it is in the making all this the disc on which a strange and most unusual imagination plays off its powers—it is in a pathos infinitely too deep for any but eclectic hearts, sufferers, doubters, and seers, to have much sympathy—it is in a reticence and reserve of verse which leaves you wondering, broken presently by a gush and sweep, and wing of verse which leaves you panting—it is by allusions and eruditions which mark the scholar but instruct the learner, set in words which make a carcanet of precious jewels over the pages that this author's superabundant power is made known. He has no sort of popularity in the general sense of that word; he is a poet for scholars and students, and only for those who have in them the faculty or the appreciation of the faculty of poetry, not patent to common eyes. Of course, we express no disrespect to such poets as Tennyson and Longfellow when we say that popular as they are, Mr. Browning neither is nor ever can be. We cannot conceive the subjects of his thought and feeling rendered into a verse which could meet the ears of multitudes of not very superior people charmed by their admirable and piercing expression; and yet, what music there is in Mr. Browning's verse! No music like it, only that it needs a certain education in life; a certain ear-experience and culture not merely to appreciate it but even to apprehend it. It is not long since we devoted some space to the notice of the method and character of our author; since then, his works have been reprinted in a comprehensive edition including that extraordinary and, some readers think, unanalyzable poem *Sordello*. It is certainly a succession of great studies fetched from history and from life—a very fine, if as surely a very strange, picture of the ways and means of a human soul in the accomplishment of its purposes. The heading of the pages in the new edition of *Sordello* is very helpful and characteristic. The following passage illustrates how the last of each series of workers sums up in himself all predecessors. Thus we see the work of

CHARLEMAGNE AND HILDEBRAND.

Dissect

Every ideal workman—(to reject
 In favour of your fearful ignorance
 The thousand phantasms eager to advance,
 And point you but to those within your reach)—
 Were you the first who brought—(in modern speech)
 The Multitude to be materialized?
 That loose eternal unrest—who devised
 An apparition i' the midst? The rout
 Was checked, a breathless ring was formed about
 That sudden flower: get round at any risk
 The gold-rough pointel, silver-blazing disk
 O' the lily! Swords across it! Reign thy reign
 And serve thy frolic service, *Charlemagne!*
—The very child of over-joyousness,
Unfeeling thence, strong therefore: Strength by stress
 Of Strength comes of that forehead confident,
 Those widened eyes expecting heart's content,
 A calm as out of just-quelled noise; nor swerves
 For doubt, the ample cheek in gracious curves
 Abutting on the upthrust nether lip;
He wills, how should he doubt then? Ages slip:
 Was it Sordello pried into the work
 So far accomplished, and discovered lurk
 A company amid the other clans,
 Only distinct in priests for castellans
 And popes for suzerains (their rule confessed
 Its rule, their interest its interest,
 Living for sake of living—there an end,—
 Wrapt in itself, no energy to spend
 In making adversaries or allies),—
 Dived you into its capabilities
And dared create, out of that sect, a soul
Should turn the multitude, already whole,
Into its body? Speak plainer! Is't so sure
God's church lives by a King's investiture?
 Look to the last step! a staggering—a shock—
 What's mere sand is demolished, while the rock
 Endures: a column of black fiery dust
 Blots heaven—that help was prematurely thrust
 Aside, perchance!—but the air clears, nought's erased
 Of the true outline; Thus much being firm based,
 The other was a scaffold. *See him stand*
Buttressed upon his mattock, Hildebrand
Of the huge brain-mask welded ply o'er ply
As in a forge; it buries either eye
White and extinct, that stupid brow; teeth clenched,
The neck tight-corded, too, the chin deep-trenched,
 As if a cloud enveloped him while fought
 Under its shade, grim prizers, thought with thought
 At dead-lock, agonizing he, until
 The victor thought leapt radiant up, and Will,
 The slave with folded arms and drooping lids
 They fought for, lean forth flame-like as it bids.

Call him no flower—a mandrake of the earth,
 Thwarted and dwarfed and blasted in its birth,
Rather, a fruit of suffering's excess,
Thence feeling, therefore stronger: still by stress
 Of Strength, work Knowledge! Full three hundred years
 Have men to wear away in smiles and tears
 Between the two that nearly seem to touch,
 Observe you! quit one workman and you clutch
 Another, letting both their trains go by—
 The actors-out of either's policy,
 Heinrich, on this hand, Otho, Barbaross,
 Carry the three Imperial crowns across,
 Aix' Iron, Milan's Silver, and Rome's Gold—
 While Alexander, Innocent uphold
 On that, each Pape key—but, link on link,
 Why is it neither chain betrays a chink?
 How coalesce the small and great? Alack,
 For one thrust forward, fifty such fall back!
 Do the popes coupled there help Gregory
 Alone? Hark—from the hermit Peter's cry
 At Claremont, down to the first serf that says
 Friedrich's no liege of his while he delays
 Getting the Pope's curse off him! The Crusade—
Or trick of breeding strength by other aid
Than strength, is safe. Hark—from the wild harangue
 Of Vimmercato, to the carroch's clang
 Yonder! The League—or trick of turning strength
 Against pernicious strength, is safe at length.
 Yet hark—from Mantuan Albert making cease
 The fierce ones, to Saint Francis preaching peace
 Yonder! *God's Truce—or trick to supersede*
The very use of strength, is safe. Indeed
 We trench upon the future! Who is found
 To take next step, next age—trail o'er the ground—
 Shall I say gourd-like?—not the flower's display
 Nor the root's prowess, but the plenteous way
 O' the plant—produced by joy and sorrow, whence
 Unfeeling and yet feeling, strongest thence?
 Knowledge by stress of merely Knowledge? No—
 E'en were Sordello ready to forego
 His life for this, 't were overleaping work
 Some one has first to do, howe'er it irk,
 Nor stray a foot's breadth from the beaten road.
 Who means to help must still support the load
 Hildebrand lifted—'why hast Thou,' he groaned,
 'Imposed on me a burthen, Paul had moaned,
 And Moses dropped beneath?' Much done—and yet
 Doubtless, that grandest task God ever set
 On man, left much to do; at his arm's wrench,
 Charlemagne's scaffold fell; but pillars blench
 Merely, start back again—perchance have been
 Taken for buttresses: crash every screen,
 Hammer the tenons better, and engage
 A gang about your work, for the next age
 Or two, of Knowledge, part by Strength and part

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 Hammer the tenons better, and engage
 A gang about your work, for the next age
 Or two, of Knowledge, part by Strength and part

By Knowledge! Then, indeed, perchance may start
Sordello on his race—would time divulge
Such secrets!

The volume before us will then, by those to whom Mr. Browning is what we have expressed him as being to ourselves, be received with all the old feelings of expectation and delight. It is like *The Men and Women* with which we are familiar. Many of the poems might form another series of *The Men and Women*; and, as illustrating that power of combining music and thought to which we have referred, we must quote the following. The meditations of Abt Vogler after he has been extemporising upon the musical instrument of his invention—whether Abt Vogler were able to say all that Mr. Browning has said we may doubt, but probably to every Beethoven or Mendelssohn all nature and spirit became symmetrical sometimes in some such palace of music—is the true ideal—the conception of the artist, the poet, the creator, rising to the what shall be over the what is, seeing a divine purpose as much in the incompleted instrument as in the fulfilled work.

1.

WOULD that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

2.

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

3.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

4.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;

And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky :
Novel splendours burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star ;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze : and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

5.

Nay more ; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place ; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last ;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new :
What never had been, was now ; what was, as it shall be anon ;
And what is,—shall I say, matched both ? for I was made perfect too.

6.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me ! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth :
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told ;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled :—

7.

*But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo they are !
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.*
Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is nought ;
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said :
Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought ;
And there ! Ye have heard and seen : consider and how the head !

8.

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared ;
Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow ;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again ! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance : is this your comfort to me ?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God : ay, what was, shall be.

9.

Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name ?
Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands !
What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same ?
Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands ?
There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round.

10.

*All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist ;
 Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, power
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
 When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
 The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
 The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
 Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;
 Enough that He heard it once ; we shall hear it by-and-by.*

11.

*And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
 For the fulness of the days ? Have we withered or agonized ?
 Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence ?
 Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized ?
 Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
 Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe :
 But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear ;
 The rest may reason and welcome : 'tis we musicians know.*

12.

*Well it is earth with me ; silence resumes her reign :
 I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
 Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
 Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—yes,
 And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
 Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep ;
 Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting place is found,
 The C Major of this life : so, now I will try to sleep.*

Mr. Browning's readers will, of course, expect from him out-of-the-way topics and strange treatments. The volume has several riches of this kind—perhaps the most remarkable is *A Death in the Desert*. It reminds us of the strange medical experience of Karshish an Arab physician in the *Men and Women* ; but as a poem it is of a still higher and more instructive order. In the *Death in the Desert*, Mr. Browning sets himself to reply, with happy point and with a pathos which thrills to the very core, to the flippancies of Strauss and Renan—for, indeed, the form dying in the desert, a brother, rather a disciple, kneeling at each side, chafing the hands, bedded on a camel's skin in the inmost grotto to which the moon's light could only penetrate a little—the form that would not move from the death fainting by the wetting of the lips with wine or the moistened plantain leaf laid to cool the forehead just above the eyes, but when the boy sprang to his knees—

Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought,

and fetched from some innermost recess the plate on which was graven, "I am the resurrection and the life," and pressed the finger of the dying man upon those graven lines, stirred and began to speak, was the apostle John ; and here with his five

attendant converts, Mr. Browning sets the most ancient of the apostles a-talking—revived, life flickering up and flaming for a moment or two from its remotest depths, the apostle reviews his past—anticipates and meets the infidel cavillings of the future—discourses from that deep introvisionary wisdom which lettered the epistles and was inspired to express the Gospel, and to behold the apocalypse, discourses of the nature of man and of truth.

“Nay, do not give me wine, for I am strong,
But place my gospel where I put my hands.”

And so the awful, patriarchal apostle talks on in words we might conceive to come from such lips, while about to close. There are, in this poem, lines and teaching most noble. No other living poet could have approached this great delineation. The following, for instance, is an illustration of its striking, mystical manner. It is the creed attributed to John by the supposed narrator.

[This is the doctrine he was wont to teach,
How divers persons witness in each man,
Three souls which make up one soul: first, to wit,
A soul of each and all the bodily parts,
Seated therein, which works, *and is what Does*,
And has the use of earth, and ends the man
Downward: but, *tending upwards for advice*,
Grows into, and again is grown into,
By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,
Useth the first with its collected use,
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—*is what Knows*:
Which, duly tending upward in its turn,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the last soul, that uses both the first,
Subsisting whether they assist or no,
And, constituting man's self, *is what Is*—
And leans upon the former, makes it play,
As that played off the first: and, tending up,
Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man
Upward in that dread point of intercourse,
Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him.
What Does, what Knows, what Is: *three souls, one man.*

There is more than poetry in this poem, however, there is the point of an argument which may lift the reader over some difficulties; and then the close—

But he was dead: 'twas about noon, the day
Somewhat declining: we five buried him
That eve, and then, dividing, went five ways,
And I, disguised, returned to Ephesus.
By this, the cave's mouth must be filled with sand.
Valens is lost, I know not of his trace;

The Bactrian was but a wild, childish man,
 And could not write nor speak, but only loved :
 So, lest the memory of this go quite,
 Seeing that I to-morrow fight the beasts,
 I tell the same to Phœbas, whom believe !
 For many look again to find that face,
 Beloved John's to whom I ministered,
 Somewhere in life about the world; they err :
 Either mistaking what was darkly spoke
 At ending of his book, as he relates,
 Or misconceiving somewhat of this speech
 Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I suppose.
 Believe ye will not see him any more
 About the world with his divine regard !
 For all was as I say, and now the man
 Lies as he lay once, breast to breast with God.

Another poem, somewhat similar in order and intention, is *Caliban upon Setebos*, in which we have Caliban delivering a discourse upon natural theology. We have long been taught to interpret Caliban as the sensual soul of the world. The sensual soul will, of course, frame a theology in harmony with itself and its character, and a pretty theology it is likely to be; and we have the god of mischief and of spite—the cold, indifferent, distant and careless god—and the nature and necessity God, and the merely gross and sensual God—and Caliban discourses upon that which he is able to see, and describes that which he is able to believe—a most edifying chapter to innumerable gentlemen of our acquaintance, Darwinians, believers in force and matter, and other such divine and worshipful deities. We cannot indicate all the poems in the volume, although they are not many in number; the most simply sacred and yet not less profound is *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, a fine setting to English verse of the spirit of all Hebrew psalmody and literature—a soliloquy of the Rabbi in his age.

Grow old along with me !
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made :
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith " A whole I planned,
 Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid ! "

Rejoice we are allied
 To That which doth provide
 And not partake, effect and not receive !
 A spark disturbs our clod;
 Nearer we hold of God
 Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,

Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go !
Be our joys three-parts pain !
Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;
Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the throe !

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail :
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me :
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

Not once beat "Praise be Thine !
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too :
Perfect I call thy plan :
Thanks that I was a man !
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do !"

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice :

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account ;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount :

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped ;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor ! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change ; the Past gone, seize to-day !"

Fool ! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall ;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure :
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be :
Time's wheel runs back or stops ; Potter and clay endure.

*He fixed thee amid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,*

*This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest ;
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.*

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press ?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress ?

Look not thou down but up !
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow !
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel ?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men ;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst :

So, take and use Thy work !
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim !
*My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup as planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !*

We have quoted at length, but only in the hope that every one able to read these verses will turn not only to this volume but to all the works of Robert Browning—most far seeing—most deeply feeling—most erudite and reverent of living poets.

V.

FREDERICK RIVERS, INDEPENDENT PARSON.*

OH Mrs. Florence Williamson, do you then indeed wear breeches ostensibly and visibly? Have we not seen you in such? And have you not been seen often in gown and bands deploying before assembled congregations? And have you not usually passed muster among men folk? Oh, Mrs. Florence Williamson, are you not a tolerably well known, independent parson yourself of a very well-known and somewhat ancient suburban chapel and congregation? Have you then been imposing upon us in this indecent way all along, and are your whiskers false? Have not incognitos their moral limitations, and have you not a little outraged those limitations? Surely *noms de plume* or *noms de guerre* should have some consistency in them, and truly the *nom de plume* of this title-page does not seem very decent; for, oh, Mrs. Florence Williamson, a great mind cannot hide itself, and it needed not rumour's trumpet tongue to proclaim you false. A slight knowledge of denominational circumstances enabled our poor mind to trace your individuality from page to page while those yet more marked and distinct indications arising from the combination of certain theological leanings with a temper certainly not nice, compelled us to exclaim, as in the case of the unhappy jackdaw of Rheims—

“Heedless of grammar, they all cried, ‘That’s him,
That’s the scamp that has done this scandalous thing.’”

Seriously, from no aspect of criticism, either as work of art, or satire, or moral sermon, or autobiography, do we like this book. We are heartily and unaffectedly sorry that the author does these things; if he be determined to be a satirist, and in all conscience, he has unkindness and bitterness enough, if these were the qualities especially needed, why not fly higher, take a noble scope, and aim to work her satire into great principles of art and human character and progress? Regarded from any point of view, *Frederick Rivers* seems to us to be an essentially bad book. Of course, it is intended to convey the idea of a portrait of the working of things among Congregationalists. We are far from believing that of all the

**Frederick Rivers, Independent Parson.* By. Mrs. Florence Williamson.
Williams and Norgate.

people on the face of the earth who confess and call themselves Christians, Congregationalists alone have found the Holy Grail. It is this author's belief that Congregationalists form "little scraps of churches that are found amongst Dissenting sects in a most bewildering muddle." Congregationalists have many things to learn we believe. In our organization and general polity it is to be hoped we are far away from perfection; as to the "bewildering muddle," the Church of England we fancy furnishes a much more edifying example at present. The volume before us, but for the utterly nasty spirit which pervades it, might really be supposed to point to the admirable self-righting power existing in Congregational churches. We are far enough ourselves from thinking that the system always works as happily as it seems to have done in the case of Frederick Rivers. It is true, he had those two types of Deacons, Bung and Lush; but then he also had that "prince of deacons, Parkinson," and Cave, and although the people rebelled against the teaching of Maurice' heresies, and the introduction of disliked and unusual things into the service, and he had to endure neglect, and what perhaps seems like persecution for a time, all things came right-about-face at last. If, by the want of faith among his people, the independent parson got into debt and difficulty, by the faith and kindness of other of his people he got out of debt and difficulty. All this forms a part of the story, and the system should have the credit of it. Who are Independent parsons that they are to impose their creeds or their crotchets upon people against their will? Suppose the creed or the crotchet to be the highest form of truth, then, in the degree in which it is so, will its proclaimer and believer be able to stand the test of endurance? We altogether dissent from the meanness and servility of the Rev. Mrs. Florence Williamson's ecclesiastical creed. The theory of Congregationalism is that service to God must be a reasonable service. Our author's idea of a Congregational church meeting is that it is "a clique of ignorant fanatics" (285); and here is a delectable little piece of literary bijouterie for a Congregational minister to pen:—

We live in degenerate times—and yet there are redeeming features; and institutions still survive to remind us that we are of the same flesh and blood with those who stoned heretics to death or fried them on gridirons. To the disgrace of civilization and religion in merry England, *persecution* has died away; but by a merciful Providence, to save us from utter Atheism, there still remain, little as we may deserve them—*Church-meetings*.

But we do injustice to our author—we must represent him a

little more fairly. He belongs to a class of men which has appeared in our midst lately, the chief article of whose faith is, that tradespeople have no souls. This may be an unreasonable creed on the part of the holders of it, but it must qualify our own expressions, and we must take it into consideration as accounting for that bitterness of expression which leaps to the pen or to the lip when those essentially bad people, tallow-chandlers, grocers, and bakers are mentioned. The only people, according to the authoress of 'Salem Chapel,' George Macdonald, and our author, who have any right to be religious are the people belonging to the peerage, or to the professions, or to the poor. As to the whole middle classes and trading classes of the country, it is an act of exceeding impertinence that they should concern themselves at all either with the cure of their own souls or anybody else's.

There is a term our author uses of which he is very fond, as designating character, especially a character in a Dissenting college—it is the word *prig*, and also its adjective, *priggish*. Did it ever occur, we wonder, to the Rev. Frederick Rivers, that there is very much of the prig in the precious creed which sets up an intellectual *wicket-gate* in the narrow way to the celestial city—narrow, indeed, for the condition of a knowledge of the method of salvation; and the right to meddle with matters pertaining to it depends upon the belonging, on the one hand, to a certain literary and intellectual aristocracy, or to the entire giving up of the whole being, body, soul, and spirit to the leading of Frederick Rivers and company. If we may say an honest word here, it would be this—whatever may be the contempt of such men for tradesmen, our contempt for their paltry, utterly ridiculous and "priggish" assumption of a right to found a church of the intellect alone on earth, and a heaven for the intellectual beyond the grave far transcends theirs. If there be one mere aristocracy more cold, cruel, heartless and utterly unamiable than another, it is that aristocracy of mere glass-eyed, white lipped, cold-blooded, or no blooded intellect. Rather than belong to that, we plunge right into our author's church of "Jackasses"—pretty word, but oh, reader, it is not ours—it is one of the flowers of rhetoric lining the pathway of our highly cultivated author—so highly cultivated, thinks the *Saturday Review*, that the like of him is not to be found among us as yet—a character far too high, Frederick Rivers, for the scope and aim of illiterate Congregationalism. Yet even the *Saturday*

"Gentle" paper, "meek and mild,"

uttered a mild reproof upon the frequent recurrence of our

author to the society of "jackasses." No ; we can find no good or useful thing in this book ; there are passages which make us think as poorly of the author's heart as, we confess, we have not the most exalted opinion of his head. We know most of the people who figure in these pages,—the people and the places. We could find our way very well to St. George's Road, but we should inquire for the name of another saint, if we were in a dilemma as to the independent parson's whereabouts. Yes ; and we recognise "the minister—now nearly seventy years old—of a very large chapel in London," and we are glad to see no unkind caricature, in this single instance, of the Rev. James Richardson, D.D. :—

What he was doctored for and whence his degree came were great mysteries—but a degree he certainly had. *He was a little shrivelled-looking man, painfully prim and priggish, of the highest respectability, and a "perfect gentleman" in the sense of being always very stiff and cold—*

and the Rev. John Veneer, "a charming little dandy, always "as well dressed as tailor and hatter and glover could make "him, with a very common-place, not to say vulgar, expression "of countenance ;" and the Rev. Ebenezer Dickson, "quietest of "men, solitary and sallow." We recognise and know very well "poor Tomkins, who "wags his paw no longer in a pulpit, but "in a country post-office ;" and Frederick Rivers, Professor of Theology, and his Professor of Biblical Literature,—we think our readers will recognise—

The Professor of Theology was also the Principal ; a not ungenial man, and well read in history, especially the history of England. He had taken a considerable part in those religious controversies that had disturbed the Dissenting world, and was by no means unknown beyond that narrow circle. He had defied the public opinion of nonconformity on the question of State education, and so far had given hostages to virtue. He had even ventured upon a feud with "the London Missionary Society," the most powerful corporation outside the Church ; and, when it chooses, not much less powerful for mischief at home than for good abroad. He was "at daggers drawn" with the Professor of biblical literature in his own college ; who was perhaps the best Hebrew scholar in England, either in or out of the Established Church. He seemed to have an ambition to be mediator between a certain party of free-thinkers that he considered extreme, and another extreme party which he considered, in the main, orthodox. But in college his lectures were tedious and unlearned ; confined mainly to a criticism, from the modern Evangelical point of view, of the Puritan divines. His Greek was ludicrous even to his own classes. His Latin was sometimes faltering. He had little, if any, direct knowledge of the

Fathers; and far too slender an acquaintance with the history of doctrines. He was a gentleman, a historian, a careful reviewer, a judicious governor of a college, impartial even to the extent of being almost chargeable with universal coldness, tolerant of everything but downright, outspoken, unconventional conviction; but he was no theologian. The men who seemed most attentive to his lectures were, alas! too often drawing caricatures of himself and parodies of his teaching.

Mr. Edwards is also recognisable—"man of very considerable means, who contributed to nearly every one of the societies, "and subscribed to the general income of the place quite five times as much as his ordinary pew rent," and who yet, after all, left Frederick Rivers and St. George's Road. Ah, but Mrs. Williamson ought to have told us that Mr. Edwards, whom we happen to know very well, relinquished his pew and his support because the independent parson insisted on having no such nonsense as prayer at the opening or closing of his day school, to which Mr. Edwards was also a considerable contributor.

The following portrait reveals much of the method of amiable, truthful Mrs. Florence Williamson, in dealing with what is unquestionably a great nuisance among us,—the Diploma pest:—

The Reverend Josiah Bulky, for instance, DD., LL.D., was a burning and a shining light—D.D. of the University of Chicago, and LL.D. of the University of *£ s. d.*—represented in this country by a gentleman speaking broken English and "bearded like the pard," who advertizes in the *Daily Telegraph*, and "gives information" about foreign diplomas to the learning and worth which an ungrateful England has overlooked. And why should not modest merit be decorated, and in fact become changed into blatant self-asserting merit. Modesty, after all, is a poor, mean, grovelling virtue; and if a violet chooses to hide itself and be discovered only by the scent, that is no reason why the Rev. J. Bulky should hide himself and run the risk of not being discovered at all. Besides, having bought a diploma from a wandering foreigner to whom he had been kindly introduced by the British Press, was in itself a plain and convincing proof that he was a great man. And yet not a congregation would have him, not even gratis. No—he had offered his valuable services as a free gift to the frequenters of a country conventicle, and he had been ignominiously refused. Could it be then that no sphere of usefulness had been provided by Providence for the natural gifts and acquired accomplishments of the Rev. Josiah Bulky, Doctor of the Universities of Chicago and the *Telegraph* Office? Was there nothing that he could do for the Church and the universe? Yes—there was something; he could found a society for supplying country churches with useful and devoted ministers. Not indeed with himself, for it was all too plain that they declined to take him; and indeed he began to feel that he could do far greater service to mankind in other

ways. Was it for a Doctor of Divinity and Laws to waste his sweetness on the desert air? What a thrilling speech did he make at that large meeting in Leeds, when he was sent down to that rich and thriving town as a deputation from the parent society; "the society for providing snubbed and uneducated ministers for congregations who can't afford to keep them." "These brave and noble men may have no great preaching power," said the man who had been quite unable to get anybody to listen to himself; "they may be humble and comparatively unknown. Humble, did I say?" and the orator raised his head and his right hand, and gazed at the ceiling as if appealing to Heaven; "yes, humble—and, my friends, let us thank God that they are humble. Humility may seem to the carnal mind, to the haughty spirit of the unregenerate man, a mean and grovelling virtue; but it is the virtue that keeps the stars in their courses, and for the want of which Lucifer the Son of the Morning was flung down into the nethermost pit of despair and fire. My friends, I well remember the time when I was myself the humble pastor of a village church. *I was not then possessed of those distinctions which have, I fear with too indiscriminating a partiality, been bestowed upon me; and my humble charge—it might well have seemed to you almost insignificant.* When I look at your Belgrave Chapel and your East Parade Chapel, when I see the vast assemblies that crowd those spacious edifices, drinking in like parched and thirsty pilgrims the waters of life; when I see at the doors, awaiting the conclusion of the service, the equipages of wealth and the carriages of prosperity, I reflect with a thankful bosom that the Kings of Sheba and Seba are offering gifts—for are not our merchant princes kings? When I see these things, I reflect with a sigh, and yet with a holy delight, on that little village church *where I broke for nearly twelve months the bread of life.* No carriage rolled to and fro from the doors of that humble meeting-house. My single deacon was a pious baker, and the wealthiest member of my congregation was a tallow-chandler, whom I had been blest as the humble means of converting. No—my friends," said the orator, melted, if not to tears, at least to perspiration, "when I appeal to you to aid that noble society which I was one of the unworthy instruments of founding, I feel that I am not pleading for a name or a theory; I feel that am pleading for that humble village. *Before the eyes of my imagination rise the cheerful countenance of the converted tallow-chandler and the constant sobriety of the pious baker; and are these, I ask myself—no, my friends, I ask you—are these to be left without the means of grace—without a preached Gospel—without their eyes seeing their pastor—without a faithful shepherd and guide through this weary wilderness?* But I know I need not appeal further to your generosity and kindness;—and when the collection is made, let me beseech you to remember, not the humble deputation who so feebly laid its claims before you, but the spiritual necessities of that converted tallow-chandler and the unobtrusive worth of that pious baker."

In a perfect tempest of applause the Rev. Dr. Bulky resumed his seat. And yet, who would have thought it? Apart from the benefi-

cent laws of a free country, he would without compunction have wrung the neck of any humble pastor who had ventured to apply to the secretary of that society for an increase of salary.

Our author ingeniously aims to give a false rendering to church circumstances,—his brother ministers, officers, or members of his church disagreeable to him are put into his crotchety camera and come out caricatures. But, in turn, suppose we knew a little man in London, with thin, light hair, spectacles on nose, and a fidgetty kind of pedantry of manner, whom it might also be possible to sketch in this way,—one who has an awkward way of getting into scrapes — supposing he was very fond of etching, pasquinading, and ridiculing his friends, and had, at the same time, real courage if not much strength, if, standing in the centre of his own self-assurance, he swept all other assurances and faiths into a black limbo, and yet, at the same time, had a large avidity for knowledge and information of every kind, ought that to be lost sight of, and the ugly point only noticed? Oh, Mrs. Florence Williamson, your reviewers do not ask you to be generous; that, perhaps, might be too much; you may have no spare capital of sentiment for that purpose; but, by the honour and deference due to your black silk gown, surely you should be just. Perhaps yet more ugly characteristics of the book remain as yet unnoticed. Here, for instance, is a pair of congregational deacons, and the creed of congregational churches at Stockport. We must leave the Stockport churches to contend for the honour of the representative men. It seems to have been our author's way in going through life to furnish his mind with pleasant pictures of caricatured individualities. He has a fine eye for defects, but not for appreciating harmony of character.

The vacant pulpits were virtually in the gift of Brothers Swan and Redford. The Thirty-nine Articles of Salem or Zion were neither more nor less than Brothers Swan and Redford's private opinions, expressed with a very complete avoidance of any such scrupulous exactness as might savour of hair-splitting. Of all probabilities or improbabilities, it seemed to Fritz *least* probable that Brothers Swan and Redford had been sent into the world and the Church to calm the strife and remove the perplexities of disagreeing scholars and divines, and settle for ever the substance and the form of Christian doctrine.

"It seems very plain and simple to me, Mr. Rivers," said Brother Swan, one Saturday evening, when Fritz had come down to "supply" at Zion Chapel, Stockport; "it's really in a nutshell, when you come to think of it. There's the Blessed Trinity," he continued, counting off that item on his thumb, "that's a great matter, though beyond us. And then there's the Atoning Blood," giving a good hard push at his

forefinger, to indicate that this was number two of the essentials of religion; "what should we be without the Atoning Blood? And then there's the Holy Ghost, and the blessed influences of the Spirit poured out on the blind eyes of the carnal mind. And then," another finger, "there's Election, up to glorified, 'them He also glorified.' And then," threatening his little finger with dislocation, "ay, there's the 'Holy Bible, book divine, precious treasure thou art mine,' on which it all rests. Yes, yes, Mr. Rivers, it's all in a nutshell *when one comes to think about it*, and them that runs can read."

"Ay, ay, Brother Swan," responded Brother Redford, who had popped in to take what he called "a knife and fork" with his fellow-deacon, on the occasion of Mr. Rivers staying at his house, "you may well say 'them that runs can read'—and the Lord chooses the foolish, and puts down the pride of intellect; that's a sweet and comforting text. Not that you're the man to say a word again learning; for never a man in all Stopput knows his Bible better nor you do."

"Maybe not, maybe not; thanks be to the Blessed Spirit. But it's all in a nutshell, when one comes to think about it; in a nutshell, Mr. Rivers."

"Yes, very possibly; but many people have found it hard work to crack the shell and get at the kernel."

"True, and it's the natural man; and that's where it is the Bible's so wonderful true. If it wasn't for the natural man and the carnal mind our Bibles wouldn't be true. And that's where it is; when they touch the conscience the pride of intellect flies in its face, and it's enmity against God."

To this coherent and lucid summary of Christian evidences, Brother Redford could respond only with a satisfied and accordant groan.

Our estimate of the book has been wholly depreciating, and justly so. Coarse oaths stream lavishly throughout its pages. exhibitions of fast life, assuredly not needed; defences of theatres and theatrical amusements, &c. Nor can we appreciate such passages as the following, exhibiting our author's disposition to satirize those who aim at some measure of regard to their consistency and their calling:—

And of course some of them *are* prigs, came to college *because* they were prigs; because they didn't know what to do with God's good world, but, as far as might be, get out of it, and give to it and all its belongings their lugubrious warnings and ignorant reproof. They cannot smile on Sunday, because it's the Lord's day; they cannot smile on Saturday, because it would disturb their preparation for the Sabbath; they cannot smile on Monday, because they are still overshadowed by the gloom of the day of rest. They cannot conscientiously pay their share to a college supper, because they're not quite certain that it's right; it's a little worldly; *nor is it exactly consistent for a young man preparing for the ministry to drink a whole half-pint of wine in addition to a modest allowance of Bass's bitter ale.* They can't smoke,

and they beg you'll not let them *see you* smoke ; because it's against the rules which they have undertaken to keep, not to mention that tobacco always makes a prig sick. They wonder you should be fond of concerts and oratorios, for where are you to draw the line? *They are very great at prayer-meetings, though they are exceedingly small in classics and mathematics. Charming characters, no doubt, redolent of sanctity—but at the same time unquestionable humbugs.*

Passages like this show the character of the author, and the character of the book. We are quite aware the writer will care very little for any opinion we may express—a word of commendation from the *Saturday Review*, high priest of the profession of prize rings, and chief apostle of literary blackguards, must far transcend and infinitely outweigh in worth anything that we can say either of praise or blame. We shall, however, express our great and unfeigned sorrow for this publication. Its authorship is not a secret, and cannot remain a secret ; the veil of anonymousness is too gauzy and thin to hide the limbs of this delicious *posé plastique*, and we shall adhere to the expression of a certain measure of respect for the author in spite of the Ham-like propensities of his spirit ; indeed, this is not our quarrel with him that he has none of the delicacy of Shem or Japheth in reverently moving backward to cover the sinning sire. That there are grievous errors in congregationalism as a working system we often enough maintain, but it is not in this way these wrongs are to be righted ; and if satire and story are to do any work to this end, they must be at any rate decent, if not dignified. The author knows our whole system, and he knows he has presented an entirely false view of the system, and of that which he has known through his own life. Was there no other entrance than this possible for him into the rich department of fiction ? Surely another was possible. Fiction is not his forte at all as an art, and hence, perhaps, his bungling through this rich dilemma of false portraiture. He lacks invention ; he has wit of the wasp kind, to irritate and sting in a little sentence ; but there are no indications of the large genial-souled humour which uses wit, as did the sorrowful Cervantes, or even as Sterne. Our counsels to the author would not inculcate the prosecution of fiction at all. He has not heart for it ; sees too much of the little in men and not enough of the noble in any man ; but if he be determined in his course, as we suppose few persons having put their hand to the plough of the story-teller, look or turn back ; then, we say to him, be honest to yourself and honest to life about you : if, as there is reason to notice in the volume before us, Mr. Macdonald be a favourite writer, we counsel our author to remember that he is neither

great nor instructive when he turns aside from the higher walks of his genius simply to vent unreasonable spleen in false portraits of the sects and sectaries, but when he aims to reach and to render the truth as it is in nature and the human soul; indulgence in the splenetic temper never made any man's works worth reading, not even for amusement. Undoubtedly, an author has a right to use his own sorrows and troubles, but he uses them very badly when they simply become a sort of waspy vinegar to render all the fountains of the water of life acid, or as Indian ink or charcoal to smudge and smear every face black that Providence or necessity puts in our company. We have dealt with the book rather as an autobiography than as a fiction. Our author will perhaps tell us we have no business to see anything more in a work or to know anything more than that which the title and subsequent pages reveal; to this we must reply, it devolves on the author either to conceal himself sufficiently, or not to call anything by their wrong names. Once more, we say, a very bad book,—the venom of "Salem Chapel" and "David Elginbrod" without their genius.

VI.

THE ROMAN AND THE TEUTON.

THIS is, we suppose, about as thoroughly incompetent a book upon such a subject as could be produced by a really able man; of course, it abounds with Mr. Kingsley's dash and brilliancy; but the first is scarcely a qualification at all for an historian, and the latter surely needs toning down by a sobriety and gravity of purpose such as this volume gives no indications of. Any man of genius would covet such a theme, and such a position as Mr. Kingsley has for the illustration of it,—probably the compass and scope of all literature furnishes no nobler theme; and if Mr. Kingsley were compelled by many avocations and various duties to deliver a course of lectures so unsubstantial, yet he also has the opportunity of repeating them many times, retouching them, adding to their information, interlacing them with new views, new reading, pruning their luxuriance, and giving to them a more compact and accredited form. He has

The Roman and the Teuton; a Series of Lectures delivered before the University at Cambridge. By Charles Kingsley, M.A., Professor of Modern History. Macmillan.

now cut himself off from this possibility ; he has given to the world a work evidently the result of haste, of reading, the accumulation rather of simple pleasure than of analysis and labour. He informs us that he takes Gibbon as his text-book in his class ; really he might have taken Gibbon as an example ; in one volume he has proposed to give to us very greatly the campaign, over which the eye of that great historian travelled in his almost matchless work. With Mr. Kingsley's great fame and great opportunities, and many preferments and position, placing the need of writing for money altogether beyond a necessity with him, he ought to have done something far better. The volume is pretentious, exceedingly conceited ; yet he is unjust to Rome, of which we may presume he knows something, and dogmatic about ethnology, of which we may presume he knows nothing. Yet the volume will, no doubt, be read with great delight by persons who consider that history should be written in the same fashion as *Westward Ho*. Not that the *Roman and the Teuton* is to be regarded as exhibiting the same genius as that fine fiction, but it is written after the same *Impulsia Gushington* kind of style. We quite feel how possible it was for Mr. Kingsley to present aspects of the dawn of civilization in Europe and the progress of its various peoples, to most minds new. In the statement of the relations of the ancient Roman civilization to the modern German forms, from the scholarly and yet popular aspect, we believe Guizôt has not been excelled, and is not likely to be. That clear-sighted, patient, and careful, and yet in many particulars, even pictorial work, might have furnished our author with an example of the method in which history as a science may be taught. We go heartily with Mr. Kingsley in his attempt at following in the steps of his great teacher, Mr. Carlyle, whom we must remind him, however, he yet follows at an immeasurable distance, to make the persons and things of history real. He does seek to harmonize in a real fashion the great predispositions of history, such as geographical feature, the arrangements of islands, forests, and mountain chains, and the rise and development of new peoples with human freedom,—human freedom and human necessity. The first lecture in the volume is that to which we called attention some three years since, his inaugural lecture *On the limits of Exact Science, as applied to History*. The last lecture is, as a title, more suggestive, and which might be turned to account in the review of the great histories of the globe—*The Strategy of Providence*. It is perhaps the most suggestive lecture in the volume, commenced in its author's usually rather conceited key, by the information that among other things with which he is

acquainted, he knows something of the theory and art of war. The positions of the great Teutonic people are described with very considerable clearness, as in relation to the historic grounds they were to occupy and the work they were to do. Such a passage as the following makes us wish that the author had given more time and thought to the comparison of the ethnological and geographical problems, the very title of his work suggests.

What then were the causes of the success of the Teutons? Native courage and strength?

They had these: but you must recollect what I have told you, that those very qualities were employed against them; that they were hired, in large numbers, into the Roman armies, to fight against their own brothers.

Unanimity? Of that, alas! one can say but little. The great Teutonic army had not only to fight the Romans, but to fight each brigade the brigade before it, to make them move on; and the brigade behind it likewise, to prevent their marching over them; while too often two brigades quarrelled like children, and destroyed each other on the spot.

What, then was the cause of their success? I think a great deal of it must be attributed to their admirable military position.

Look at a map of Europe; putting yourself first at the point to be attacked—at Rome, and looking north, follow the German frontier from the Euxine up the Danube and down the Rhine. It is a convex arc: but not nearly as long as the concave arc of the Roman frontier opposed to it. The Roman frontier overlaps it to the north west by all Britain, to the south west by part of Turkey and the whole of Asia Minor.

That would seem to make it weak, and liable to be outflanked on either wing. In reality it made it strong.

Both the German wings rested on the sea; one on the Euxine, one on the North Sea. That in itself would not have given strength, for the Roman fleets were masters of the seas. But the lands in the rear, on either flank, were deserts, incapable of supporting an army. What would have been the fate of a force landed at the mouth of the Weser on the north, or at the mouth of the Dnieper at the west? Starvation among wild moors, and bogs, and steppes, if they attempted to leave their base of operations on the coast. The Romans saw this, and never tried the plan. To defend the centre of their position was the safest and easiest plan.

Look at this centre. It is complicated. The Roman position is guarded by the walls of Italy, the gigantic earthwork of the Alps. To storm them is impossible. But right and left of them, the German position has two remarkable points—strategic points, which decided the fate of the world.

They are two salient angles, promontories of the German frontier. The one is north-east of Switzerland; the Allman country, between

the head-waters of the Danube and the Upper Rhine, Basle is its apex, Mentz its northern point, Ratisbon its southern. That triangle encloses the end of the Schwartzwald; the Black Forest of primæval oak. These oaks have saved Europe.

The advantages of a salient angle of that kind, in invading an enemy's country are manifest. You can break out on either side, and return at once into your own country on "lines of interior operation;" while the enemy has to march round the angle, three feet for your one, on "lines of exterior operation." The early German invaders saw that, and burst again and again into Gaul from that angle. The Romans saw it also (admirable strategists as they were) and built Hadrian's wall right across it, from the Maine to the Danube, to keep them back. And why did not Hadrian's wall keep them back? On account of the Black Forest. The Roman never dared to face it; to attempt to break our centre, and to save Italy by carrying the war into the heart of Germany. They knew (what the invaders of England will discover to their cost) that a close woodland is a more formidable barrier than the Alps themselves. The Black Forest, I say, was the key of our position, and saved our race.

Should we simply receive the work of an author, accept that which he gives us, and ask no questions, and express no dissatisfaction? There are many instances in which we are not unwilling to do this, but then such a limitation of criticism must depend upon the sense we have of the author's faithfulness to the great idea suggested by his work. How much of thought and imagination rises to the mind by the mention of the Roman—the Roman at the dawn of the Christian era! Who was he? how came he to be? what was the extent of his power? what were the characteristics of it,—of that matchless Roman law? its arm of sinewy irresistible strength, its civilization so marvellously compact and united, a form of strength, regarded as mere strength, we suppose more iron-like and rigid than any the world has ever known! The reader will meet with nothing of this in Mr. Kingsley's volume. He would reply, perhaps, "my business was to exhibit the Roman and the Teuton in their mighty grapple with each other; to exhibit only the dying empire and the birth of the forest people;" but this is most manifestly an incomplete view of the whole matter. When that death-struggle of the empire commenced, and it was nearly a thousand years in dying, to what a pitch of splendour it had reached! The world had seen, and has seen since, nothing like it; the Roman eagles were gathering and flying over the face of the whole known world. Wherever carcasses or bodies were—in remotest islands or forests,—wherever a form of government was tottering to its fall, there swooped down the eagle of Rome. Its colonial policy was a marvellous policy.

Rome would never have governed her colonies as we have governed ours, to our loss and detriment; it was due to the great people whose history he recites, towards the close of their career, to have developed not only what they became at their close, but what they were in their growth and in their strength. He takes up the period when Rome had become the slave of her own slaves, and attempts, in a remarkably free picture, to give to us a parallel from the possibilities of our day—the time-honoured institutions of the bullbait, the cockpit, and the ring, in daily operation—Hyde Park turned into a gigantic arena, where criminals from Newgate and beasts from the Zoological Gardens have a set-to; the lady patronesses of Almack's assiduously engaged in patronising the prize-fights, and one of them within the ropes, seen by the side of Sayers; French cooks, Italian singers, and foreign artists in the chief places of power; Mario, Prime Minister; a singer from the opera, Duke of Middlesex and Governor-general of India; Palmerston and Derby in the Tower, under sentence of death; Lord Brougham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr. Gladstone dying, their veins opened in a bath; all the aristocracy off to fortnightly races on the Downs, their slaves holding meantime the chief places in, and performing the work of the great cities of London and Westminster—all things going to wreck. This is a condensed view of Mr. Kingsley's free and easy picture of the dying empire. Then over this state of things rushed that which Mr. Kingsley calls *The Human Deluge*:—

Taking one's stand at Rome, and looking toward the north, what does one see for nearly one hundred years? Wave after wave rising out of the north, the land of night, and wonder, and the terrible unknown; visible only as the light of Roman civilization strikes their crests, and they dash against the Alps, and roll over through the mountain passes, into the fertile plains below. Then at last they are seen but too well; and you discover that the waves are living men, women, and children, horses, dogs, and cattle, all rushing headlong into that great whirlpool of Italy: and yet the gulf is never full. The earth drinks up the blood; the bones decay into the fruitful (s)oil: the very names and memories of whole tribes are washed away. And the result of immigration which may be counted by hundreds of thousands is this—that all the land is waste.

One of our chief objections to Mr. Kingsley's volume is, that he recites the story of the rise of Gothic civilization and the sweeping over Europe of the swarms of the German (*Guerreman*) tribes in the spirit of the *Nibelungen Lied*—a most entertaining method, if Mr. Kingsley were in his present work what he so admirably is in other works, a minstrel. But here, fas-

cinating as his method must be to young readers, he is a grave historian. We have no doubt that he realizes, in his rapid instinctive manner, these men; to him, in his sage-like fashion, they all come trembling forth from their deep inclosures of mountain and forest, a childish race. The Teuton, while the Roman was founding his colossal empire of force, sat an awkward child among the forest beasts: here is his picture of the men who overcame and conquered Rome, and founded the nations of Europe. He conceives of them as a kind of excavating navy or rough English sea-dog of a sailor:—

For good or for evil they were great boys; very noble boys; very often very naughty boys—as boys with the strength of men might well be. Try to conceive such to yourselves, and you have the old Markman, Allman, Goth, Lombard, Saxon, Frank. And the notion may be more than a mere metaphor. Races, like individuals, it has been often said, may have their childhood, their youth, their manhood, their old age, and natural death. It is but a theory—perhaps nothing more. But at least, our race had its childhood. Their virtues, and their sad failings, and failures, I can understand on no other theory. The nearest type which we can see now is, I fancy, the English sailor, or the English navy. A great, simple, honest, baby—full of power and fun, very coarse and plain spoken at times: but if treated like a human being, most affectionate, susceptible, even sentimental and superstitious; fond of gambling, brute excitement, childish amusements in the intervals of enormous exertion; quarrelsome among themselves, as boys are, and with a spirit of wild independence which seems to be strength; but which, till it be disciplined into loyal obedience and self-sacrifice, is mere weakness; and beneath all a deep practical shrewdness, an indomitable perseverance, when once roused by need. Such a spirit as we see to this day in the English sailor—that is the nearest analogue I can find now. One gets hints here and there of what manner of men they were, from the evil day, when one hundred and two years before Christ, the Kempers and Teutons, ranging over the Alps toward Italy, 300,000 armed men and 15,000 mailed knights with broad sword and lances, and in their helmets the same bulls'-horns, wings, feathers, which one sees now in the crests of German princes, stumbled upon Marius and his Romans, and were destroyed utterly, first the men, then the women, who like true women as they were, rather than give up their honour to the Romans, hung themselves on the horns of the waggon-oxen, and were trampled to death beneath their feet; and then the very dogs, who fought on when men and women were all slain—from that fatal day, down to the glorious one, when, five hundred years after, Alaric stood beneath the walls of Rome, and to their despairing boast of the Roman numbers, answered, "Come out to us then—the thicker the hay, the easier mowed,"—for five hundred years, I say, the hints of their character are all those of a boy-nature.

They were cruel at times: but so are boys—much more cruel than grown men, I hardly know why—perhaps because they have not felt suffering so much themselves, and know not how hard it is to bear. There were varieties of character among them. The Franks were always false, vain, capricious, selfish, taking part with the Romans whenever their interest or vanity was at stake—the worst of all Teutons, though by no means the weakest—and a miserable business they made of it in France, for some five hundred years.

Of course, people like these find a wonderful share of sympathy from Charles Kingsley. His very realising power sometimes makes him perhaps unjust to them and their surroundings; he sees them swept down by myriads in battles, and if he pities them, he says, he “pities them as a child who steals apples and “makes himself sick with them after all.” As to bloodshed, well, it is a bad thing, certainly; but nature kills her twenty or fifty thousand by an earthquake, why should not we? Having sat, he says, by many death-beds, he is tempted to think that death in battle is not an unenviable mode of going out of a troublesome world. It is known that peace vagaries find no favour in the eyes of this professor, not only of history, but of muscular Christianity. Before we blame the Teutons for their warlike businesses, we had better look to our own sins in killing every year more of her Majesty’s subjects by preventable disease than they ever killed by the bloodiest battle. Our readers will find Mr. Kingsley’s volume to be a most pleasant and readable book. As a set of romantic etchings from the death-bed of the old and the birth-chambers of the new civilization, it is a pleasant and instructive book; but as an utterance from a chair of history and a development of the origin and growth of modern civilization, to young students, the book seems to us a mysterious one. It abounds in topics of interest, but we suppose thoughtful readers will not derive from it that which they have found in the careful, modest, and thoughtful pages of Mr. Kingsley’s two immediate predecessors.

OUR BOOK CLUB.

MESSRS. T. and T. Clark, of Edinburgh, have laid for many years now almost every student's library under infinite obligations to them for their handsome and able editions and translations of Continental, especially German theology. They have never more deserved the thankfulness of theological readers than now, for their beautiful edition of *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ; a Complete Critical Examination of the Origin, Contents, and Connection of the Gospels, translated from the German of J. P. Lange, D.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Bonn. Edited, with Additional Notes, by Rev. Marcus Dods, A.M.*, 6 vols. (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.) We purpose, now that this edition is complete, again calling attention to the work. We content ourselves, this month, with heartily expressing our thanks to the publishers for introducing, with its extensive annotations from the pen of the well-known and able English editor, a book which we cannot suppose, in its German form, can be very well known, however desirable it may be that it should find a place in the library of every Divinity student.

FROM the same enterprising publishers we have also to acknowledge the receipt of *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, specially designed and adapted for the use of Ministers and Students. From the German of G. V. Lechler, D.D., and R. Gerok; edited by J. P. Lange, D.D. Translated by Rev. Paton J. Gloak. Vol. I.* In this volume, readers who have found the helpfulness of Lange's Commentaries on Matthew and Luke, will be glad to find the same method followed in dealing with the Acts. For ourselves, with the single exception, perhaps, of Olshausen, Lange has frequently been the most helpful of all those valued men who have brought the ancient text to the light of modern elucidation. Also, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, by C. F. Keil, D.D., and F. Delitzsch, D.D., Professor of Theology. Vol. I. The Pentateuch. Translated from the German by Rev. James Martin, B.A., Nottingham.* (T. and T. Clark.) Even after the truly innumerable books upon the Pentateuch we have received lately, we are heartily glad to receive this. There is a life in the criticisms, a happy, realizing power in the words which will make this contribution to the theological library most acceptable. The Commentary, while it is verbal and critical, has also that which seldom goes with these gifts—a faculty of gathering up and generalizing the lesson and the

story, which will immensely add to its value—it aims to be an exegetical handbook, by which some fuller understanding of the Old Testament economy of salvation may be obtained from a reading in the light of the New Testament teachings.

ONE of its author's pretty little books is, *The Lambs all Safe; or, the Salvation of Children*. By Rev. Alexander Balloch Grosart. (W. Oliphant and Co.) If Mr. Grosart goes on at this rate his books bid fair to be like Abraham's children, "as many as the stars of the sky for multitude, and as the sand which is on the sea-shore, innumerable." We quite believe this will be a useful and comfortable little book, abounding with references to many rare works, many touching lines and verses from the poets, and many sweet little passages of feeling and criticism. But, if we may say so, will not Mr. Grosart serve the Church and his age best by putting his powers more into harness, and his taste to school? Everything he does is good, but there is a better yet before him. As to the little thing in our hands, it is a sweet little offering to lay upon some household table after a little coffin has gone out of the door. We know of nothing else that so concisely, and seriously, and sweetly, expresses the comfortable word to the breaking hearts of weeping parents.

FOR such books as *Whisperings of Truth for God and His Glory, a True Story of Heart Trials*. By Rev. George B. Scott, Author of the 'Beauty of Holiness,' &c. &c. (E. Marlborough and Co.)—there is always a market. Minds quite unable to bear the too glowing light and tropical luxuriance of fiction find themselves comforted and helped by a mild and quiet biography. It is the story of a young pilgrim, we presume, connected with Mr. Scott's church. He has told the story with much sweetness, and interspersed it with many pleasant and cheerful lights and tones of verse—a kind of book to be appreciated in a sick chamber,—a help and aid for Little-faith, Much-afraid, and Despondency. Several of the reflections of Mr. Scott have a very beautiful and instructive freshness.

The Congregational Topic.

VIII.

THE INSTINCT FOR SOULS.

WHILE, during the past month, letters and papers have been teeming from our denominational organs on the evangelization of our rural or neglected population, we have ourselves become aware of a little circumstance which has put the method of doing the desirable work in altogether a new and affecting light. In a watering-place, the best known, most frequented, and most densely populated, near London—in an outlying district, a chapel, a mission chapel has within the last twelve-months been opened by the united services of Thomas Binney and Samuel Morley—the ministrations conducted since by the ministers of the town, and especially by the earnest, indefatigable work of a local lay labourer; but, unhappily, a few Sabbaths since, the place needed a supply, and there was a necessity for falling back upon one, and that one of the very best known, of our Colleges. Our friend, the local lay labourer, himself a man of very clear and well-informed intelligence among books as well as men, penetrated into the vestry, and behold! the young neophyte to his undisguised commingled horror and amazement, draped and swathed and

wrapped and flowered in all the adornment of gown, cassock, bands, &c., &c. It was all in vain that our friend remonstrated that a gown had never been seen in the building,—that Mr. Binney had not worn one—that the ministers of the town, who wore the cloak in their own temples, left “their cloak at Troas” when they came there—the young brother was obstinate—it was vain to remind him that the people might laugh at it; that they were a poor plain race of artisan folk. The gown was an essential part of his individuality—on that very spot, in the streets round about, something more than Puseyism was seeking to pervade and leaven all things; it was argued that it was necessary to keep perfect the simplicity of our system—it was all in vain—the service was in the gown. Our young friend even became affecting as he declared that he could not preach without the gown—the whole virtue of the business would be lost without the gown, and in that pulpit, before the astonished audience, he really disported himself in that fashion—a pulpit, by the way, in which only some few weeks before, a very estimable and respectable clergyman of the

Church of England, a vicar, we believe, in some part of Derbyshire, had most indecorously exhibited himself without the silken machinery. "Was I too short?" said the young brother in the vestry to our lay friend, after the service. "Certainly *not* too short," was the satisfactory information. For, ourselves, we had serious thoughts of enclosing, through the principal of the College, a note to the senior student, inquiring whether, as it is the custom to give three good rounds of cheers when a man does a very worthy thing, it might not be as well to propose three good rounds of laughter in the common hall for the young delinquent, who had certainly done a very foolish thing—proclaiming that all his words and ministry—his mind, and his attainments, his truth, and his tongue would be only like "a Heath the desert" if exhibited without a gown. The incident is funny—we are half afraid it is characteristic. This little notice of it has been pressed upon us by the numerous efforts now made to reach the ear and the heart of the people. We are afraid that this little circumstance indicates the principal barrier in the way of success, in the evangelization and conversion of the people. The instinct of gowns is greater than the instinct of souls; perfunctoriness is death to vitality; and what can touch so living a thing as a soul save life—a living soul? We

have been interested by the several papers published especially in the *Patriot*, and the letters of Dr. Ferguson, and their attempts to answer the question, how is England to be evangelized? deserve very close and serious thought. And how is England to be evangelized? Has anybody much hope of it? For our part, it seems to us that, pretty well, all our work goes to holding fast the ground we say we have. We seem really to break into very little new ground. The saints have to be fed; and that feeding-time absorbs all the labour and thought of many of our churches and ministers. The feeding-time is really like that in the Zoological gardens; it is the chief thought and object of attraction; and the catching of animals from the desert, and training "lions and beasts of savage name," enters as little really into the thought of nearly all the Christians we know, ourselves included, as the catching an African lion or a Bengal tiger enters into the thought of the visitors standing before the cage in the menagerie. We suppose we shall be well trimmed by some of our "unco' gude" brethren whose life is one long and hallowed self-denial, according to their own theory, when we say that this being "fed and being built," is the death to all true progress and life amongst us; and we greatly fear that whatever plans may be devised and adopted,

they are likely to fail, because they do not spring from and find their satisfaction in that instinct for souls; for instance, of what avail is it to lay down rules and programmes to guide a man or men in the achievements of great ministerial work. This is very well and very necessary for a certain kind of hod-ma-dod labourer, but for great work, the work which tells, no programme of labour helps. Churches have a favourite theory that ministers are the best men in the churches; and they test their theory by trying the faith, patience, piety, and self-denial of their ministers, while their own little slips of those "plants of renown," are left, for the most part, uncultivated. We believe, if most ministers spoke honestly, they would say "that which we preach is a faith with us. We believe it really, but we don't believe it more than you. You call for extraordinary work from us; we really have it not to give. We mete out our labours as best we may; we are not pressed upon by burning desires and affections; nor are you. A decent, orderly, well-conditioned, decorous faith is all that either of us have. It is all to which we can minister; all that you can appreciate;" hence when to a temper like this, mighty propositions are presented about the worth of souls, and the salvation of souls, &c., &c., the language rises altogether above the knowledge or the

conception. It certainly would not do to say, "This is all nonsense, souls are of no value. We see them plunging out into the great night that lies round this world, by millions, every day—we don't believe in their value—God does not seem to care about them." It would not do to say that bold audacious thing, and hence men unable to perceive, and not in earnest themselves, create perfunctory instrumentalities, and they say to ministers, "We will collect a certain quantity of money, you go and do the feeling, the believing, the loving, the praying." In fact, it will not be wrought that way. Religious action must bear up like the waters of the great geyser, mountains high; boiling from the deep central spring, and woe betide the pots, pans, kettles, or beefsteaks (*vide Voyages to Iceland*) that stand in the way of it. Yet sometimes the geyser has seemed to be a well conducted well behaved little thing, and travellers have boiled and washed over its bubblings. This is even that which many of us in this way have done by our Committeedoms, &c. We have used that great geyser, the religious instinct in man, as a means for keeping our pot boiling, and almost all our modern designs about religion look in that direction. "Oh, Clarkson," said William Wilberforce to his great *collaborateur* when he called upon him one Sabbath morning, and

found him sitting before his table, which was covered with papers about emancipation and slave trade—"Oh, Clarkson, do you ever think about your soul?" and Clarkson replied, "Wilberforce, I have time to think about nothing now but these poor negroes." The irrepressible instinct of the man, the divinely self-absorbed unselfishness of the man, something like this is the only power which will tell in Evangelistic movement—in one word, we shall say, quite careless who believes or disbelieves, we do not know how to do that which we desire to do. Protestantism in England has lost the art of converting souls—our readers and friends will not suspect us of Papal bearings and tendencies—not we, would God that we had a mace that we might shatter that hoary abomination! but it is in that Church, which numbers, assuredly, holy, blessed and devoted men among its members, we must look for illustrations of the instinct for souls. Catholic Home Missions are very successful. It behoves us to enquire why and how? What are their ways and means? Dr. Ferguson proposes that forty of our most eminent ministerial brethren should give one month in the year to an evangelistic itineracy to our rural and agricultural districts. We do not believe that all the ministry of the Church of England, the Independent and Baptist denominations, could pro-

duce forty men fit for the work. So many requirements go to success in such labour—it would represent a power for hard work, and that is a rare faculty—an aptitude and felicity of speech—a command over sharp, pointed words of wisdom—fertility of illustration, to take the stand on the village green or in the market place—to talk like a gentleman, so that the man should feel the presence of one well instructed and able to guide, and to talk like a brother, so that the hearer should not imagine the speaker as living in one room, or belonging to one family while he belonged to another; and what would be the use of all this without the button-hole power? It is the coming to close quarters that tries the stuff in a man—the ability to be insulted meekly, and to get the best of it, that is a rare faculty—the ability to let disputations and grumbling stupidity, ignorance, and infidelity growl or talk themselves out, and then slip in a word boggling them, putting things in a new light, so that they feel that the man knows more and has thought more than they; and then, what is the use of all this, unless it is picked up, followed up, drawn and coalesced into communities? Dr. Ferguson speaks of "forty eminent ministers," and many lay evangelists—that number can never be commanded, of that we may be certain. *Men* may be got, but where are the

men? The Martins, Binneys, Raleighs, Maclarens, Allons, Brocks, Landells, Punshons, and such able, eloquent, and honoured men would be useless for this work. All success must depend upon fitness and adaptation, and the chief thing of all needed would be not an instinct for thoughts, nor an instinct for books, or an instinct for æsthetics—all these would hurt and hinder the work; there must be chief and before all else an instinct for souls.

And what would that represent? The preacher would feel, or the converser, he had a piece of knowledge real to himself to give to the people before him—the people would become individualized to him in one soul, and he would feel that as the adding of one chemical to another entirely alters the quality of that to which it is added, so that piece of knowledge created within the person to whom he spoke a new consciousness, an entirely different perception of himself—life, and all his and its relations. Could a man feeling this be finicking about his instinct for gowns or modes of speech? Would not the thought give to him a divine abandonment? There is, perhaps, scarcely a man belonging to either of our Congregational bodies who would dare, with the apostle Paul, to be beside himself for God and man. But without something of this kind it is vain to think that people, rural, artisan, labouring, plain, poor cot-

tage people who have not been baked into Ecclesiastical shape and order are to be met. We have a morbid horror of eccentricity, and we will be bound to say, that each of the forty brethren referred to going down to evangelize a rural district, would either in the village chapel or on the village green give out a well approved hymn, sonorous, long measure, and make a prayer, a kind of creed or confession of faith of a quarter of an hour's length, and then deliver a sermon, from which should studiously be eliminated anything that could create a smile, not to say so horrid and ungodly a thing as a laugh; every touch of humanity or of humour—almost everything that could convey the idea that the man was at freedom and ease in his work. Oh, what would the brothers of the oratory say to an attempt to win over England to Popery and Rome, conducted after this fashion? Truly we wish they would try this fashion; instead of that, they try the method of the Pauline madness "beside themselves"—snatches of profane song made sacred; walking to and fro in courts and alleys, and out of the way nooks; winning by a strong word, accompanied with a kind smile; by a piercing, lightning like truth conveyed at the end of an almost entertaining anecdote, and so in the course of a year or two, behold a church, a cathedral, and Rome flourishing in that neighbourhood! This goes

on while we twaddle upon committees and read minutes of the last meeting, and wonder who will subscribe and get out our reports. Oh, where are the reports of all the Roman Catholic affiliations? What printer prints them? Where are the magazines that glorify them? The thing rises as silently as a fog, creeps up like an autumn mist over the whole landscape, never says "I'm coming," only says "I'm here." Gentlemen who are interested in these matters, as who with a Christian heart is not interested, would do very well to read the late Father Faber's *Essay on Catholic Home Missions*. It would seem that Romanism too has its members, to whom these things would be simply disgusting; to whom graceful cowls and matin bells and vesper chimes, and swelling chants and swinging lamps, and stern old crusaders' tombs, and all the poetry of religion, was most attractive. There are members of that Church as of our own, who would look with contempt if they met the Church by the way out of breath, pursuing souls with bleeding feet, hands rough and chapped, and perspiration streaming from her brow. In all bodies there are those who prefer the elegant to the prophetic in religious matters. Father Faber tells a story, not inapt, howbeit it may provoke the smile of some.

Once upon a time, as story-tellers say, there was a great missionary in France, of the name of Morcain.

Now it came to pass that this great missionary was going to give a mission in a certain French town, whose inhabitants were very much opposed to missions. The devil did not at all relish the prospect of the aforesaid M. Morcain; and after due deliberation entered into the *ouvriers* of this French town, and inspired them with a design quite worthy of himself. They met together, and they were not few in number, and they set out with their arms bare, and their teddytiller caps upon their heads, as nice a specimen of *sansculottism* as may well be conceived. The reader may divine the interior life of this procession, which marched out to salute in somewhat peculiar fashion the approaching missionary. They advanced along the road chanting a parody of the popular song:—

C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour,
Qui mène le monde à la ronde,

to this effect —

C'est le Morcain, le Morcain, le Morcain,
Qui dam ne le monde à la ronde;—

The unsuspecting missionary came quietly along in his vehicle, very likely getting up his evening discourse, when lo and behold! he is in the middle of this delectable crowd. However, a Frenchman is not often at fault. Forthwith he descends from the carriage, jumps into the middle of the crowd, takes hold of their hands, and commences dancing in the most brilliant style, at the same time joining in the chorus with right good will, C'est le Morcain, le Morcain. Away he goes dancing and singing, and his *sansculottes* with him, till they reach the door of the church; into which he also dances, irreverent fellow! and the crowd after him. But there he is on his own ground, and straightway he mounts the pulpit, and preaches a most tremendous fire-and-brimstone sermon, at the end of which he proclaims that if during the whole course of the mission any one who has sung

that song wants to go to confession he has only to cry out, *Monsieur! j'ai chanté le Morcain*, and he shall be heard immediately before any one else. No waiting for turns! No weary delay! No besieging the missionaries' confessional for hours! No! he has gained an immediate hearing! And so it was. Ever and anon, during the mission, from the outermost edge of huge crowds of women and others, no matter what was going on, came in a loud voice the appointed signal, *Monsieur! j'ai chanté le Morcain*. No sooner said than done. It is as though he were some royal personage: a passage is formed through the Red Sea of people for him; every one else gives way; no one claims his turn; it is a bargain; it is fun and consolation and earnestness all in one, and there is *Monsieur! j'ai chanté le Morcain*, foreshadowing his own arrival and acceptance one day at his Saviour's feet in heaven, in tears at the feet of him, who thus knew how to be all things to all men that by any means he might gain some.

We quite think this story carries our principle to an extreme, it illustrates Rome. Wisdom should be justified of her children, and wisdom may be. We are not fastidious ourselves, and we are persuaded, that those in whom is unfolding the instinct of souls will not be fastidious. We must recollect that we approach sinners, all of whom are about an equal mixture of savage and child. How ridiculous the method which should deal with them as scholars, or in the highest sense, as men. It was Saint Charles Borromeo, a great example for us all, every way, a Cardinal, but a great Sunday School teacher, perhaps the first

of Sunday School teachers; a beautiful and blessed labourer among the poor. It was he who said:—“A parish priest should be like a French milliner, always bringing out new modes, in order to keep up the interest, and stimulate a languishing taste.” Why not? This is the use of excitement. The Roman Catholic Church acts upon the principle of periodical missions and excitements; feels that every Church needs an occasional visit from a mission to re-awaken its energies. We want new modes for ourselves now, and without them, and a fresh and free soul, able to use them, it will be quite vain to think of being useful in visits of evangelization. One thing must pre-eminently be borne in mind, as that which alone will make us successful, that we follow the instinct for souls. Ecclesiastical politics, and the like, will come after if they come at all. It is neither an instinct for a creed, nor an instinct for an Ecclesiasticism, we must follow to be successful in this work. Mr. Paton in his paper in *The Patriot on Independency in the rural districts*, refers to the fact, that Nonconformity has lost all those families which a hundred and fifty or two hundred years since, gave it dignity and influence in the country districts. It is so; but if so, it must be because Nonconformity itself has lost the instinct which was its glory in its birthtime. Mr. Paton

is quite unjust in his description of what Church of Englandism is in our villages; we believe Church of Englandism never had, as a system, the instinct for souls; but when it is said, that "clergymen" dress themselves becomingly for the masquerade, they play and no more." It is simply dangerous to ourselves by the depreciation of their character and their work. We have seen and know these men. We have felt honour and affection for many of them, while we have marked their singular vigilance; their determination to hold indeed their own power, but their thought and care for the bodies and the homes of their peasantry and parishioners around them; the only point in which we can cope with them, is in a higher and diviner instinct for souls. If we have lost our friends in the rural districts who were independent and able to help and to sustain, it may be feared that it is because we have lost this ancient quality of our fathers, and have learned to elevate the *sect* above the *soul*. For all highest faculties of usefulness in this way, we need something of the spirit expressed by the Countess of Huntingdon in the following words:—

"My whole heart has not one single grain, this moment, of thirst after approbation. I feel alone with God; he fills the whole void; I see all mortals under my feet. I have not one wish, one will, one desire, but in him; he hath set my feet in a large room. All but God's children seem as so many machines

appointed for uses which I have nothing to do with. I have wondered and stood amazed that God should have made a conquest of all within me by love. Others may be conquered by less gifts and graces, but what must that evil heart be, that nothing but the love of God can conquer? I am brought to less than nothing; broken to pieces like the potter's vessel. O, may you thus be subject—may these tears be your meat night and day. I long to leap into the flames to get rid of my sinful flesh, and that every atom of these ashes might be separate, that neither time, place, nor person should stay God's Spirit."

This is strong and singular language, it is true; but the woman who expressed herself thus, exemplified in her own person the language she used, and it may be doubted whether any power short of this really gains or is likely to gain a hold upon the people. The whole history of the methodist movement, including, of course, beneath that term, the great agitations at that period in the Church of England; its writers, and poets, and preachers, and the Calvinistic movements of the Countess and Whitefield, and the many fellow workers round him, and the great labours of Wesley and all his ministers—are illustrations of the strong language we have quoted above. Instead of this, it really seems to us that we have done our best to kill the religious instinct; a fervent conviction dares scarcely show itself; it is instantly called to order; our feelings are made to order too; our eloquence cut out after a pattern. We are afraid of

individualism. We must label ourselves sect fashion. We have innumerable little crochets, and if the working of these be interfered with, we walk off, talk nonsense about our religious liberty which, for the most part, means determination at all hazards to have our own way. We shelve our responsibilities in the cupboards and desks of committee rooms—an awkward, plain spoken infidel tells us we don't love souls, &c. and we point him to our name down for a guinea in the report of the Gospel cum twiddle dee dee society. We estimate all divine things after a money standard—not that we contribute so much as a body after all—even here we do not test our own resources; and meantime, in the depths and on the fringes of the forest land of our country, on the wastes of moors, in out of the way hamlets, in villages, there are men and women it is well known, growing up, who know no more of Christ and His salvation than their cows and pigs. To meet this, it will be of no use thinking of any usefulness without such a baptism in the worker as shall really be equivalent to the creation, and calling into existence, of a new instinct. Would our readers ask us for some illustration of what we mean. We beg them to get and to read a little volume which we are glad to see in its fifth edition, called *Strange Tales*, by

John Ashworth.* We have seen no notice anywhere of this marvellous little book. We have been, and are painfully afraid to call attention to it. It is a wonderful home missionary report, and we know how usefulness may be perilled by pointing at it the finger of prominency. It is the recitation of the work which we believe has to be done, and the way in which it ought to be done. Mr. Ashworth realizes what we have meant all along by this instinct of souls—that love for immortal mankind, and belief that we have the power to reach it, and to do it good which overwhelms all obstacles and bears down all before it. We shall ask our readers when they have procured this book to read first its last paper called *My New Friends*. It is really the story of the life, walk, and triumph of faith. Thus a simple man sets to work, a plain, working day sort of man, meets with laughter and contempt from the people who do salvation by committees, and so after waiting awhile sets to work himself, opens his chapel for the destitute, following meantime his own trade, expecting to make no worldly gain out of his labour of love; continues to hold and to fulfil all his offices and duties as a layman in the church to which he belongs. Let us quote a few passages from this exemplary story.

* *Strange Tales from Humble Life.* By John Ashworth. Fifth Edition. (Morgan and Chase).

Believing that God would bless the undertaking, I determined not to consult any human being, but go at once to work, dependant upon God's help and blessing. I took a small room, and got two thousand small bills printed, worded as follows:—

CHAPEL FOR THE DESTITUTE,
(near the Bank steps,)

BALLIE-STREET, ROCHDALE,

Ye houseless, homeless, friendless,
pennyless outcasts, . . . Come!
In rags and tatters Come!
Ye poor and, maim'd, and halt and
blind, Come!
Of whatever colour or nation, creed
or no creed, Come!

Jesus loves you,

And died to save you.

'Come, then, to Him, all ye wretched,
Lost and ruin'd by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.'

NO COLLECTIONS.'

All we seek is your welfare, both
body and soul.

Service every Sunday evening at a
quarter-past Six.

Come, poor sinners; come and wel-
come.

Fifty of these bills were fixed on blue pasteboard, with a small loop of red tape at the top. With nails in one pocket, and a hammer in the other, I went to all the barber's shops and lodging-houses in the town, requesting permission to hang up the cards. In no place was I refused, and I returned home late in the evening, rejoicing over my success.

One Sunday morning—and to me a memorable Sunday morning—with about five hundred bills in my pocket, I began to walk through the back streets and low places; and where I saw either man or woman in dirt and rags, I offered them a bill, and respectfully requested them to come to the service. If they could not read the bill, I read it for them. Some made merry

with it, others stared at me, but very few promised to come.

Soon after dinner I entered one lodging-house, and asked permission to see the inmates. I was shown into a large room, containing sixteen persons. I pulled off my hat, bowed to the company, and began to distribute my bills. One young man, with a short pipe in his mouth, twisted my paper into a spill to light his tobacco, then burst out laughing, and began to dance a jig in the midst of the floor. Without seeming to take notice of his having burned my bill, I said—

"You can dance well; can you do anything else so cleverly?"

"Yes, I am a first-rater at everything," was his answer.

"Well, let me hear if you can read this paper as well as you can dance."

He took the bill, pulled the pipe out of his mouth, stood on an old wooden-bottomed chair, and began, with a theatrical bearing and a loud voice, to read; but when he came to the words, "Jesus loves you, and died to save you," his voice faltered, he quietly stepped down, and laid the paper on the chair, observing, "I wish I had not read that, it reminds me of better days." Seeing the dancer break down, there was a general call for Jenny Lind. The person honoured by that name was partaking of a tea-dinner in the corner. She earned her bread by singing in the streets and public-houses. Jenny took the bill and read it through, and, amidst the clapping of hands, resumed her tea-dinner. A surly-looking man, with a flat nose and blood-shot eyes, growled out, "I thought there was nought in heaven, earth, or hell that cared for us, but it seems there is somebody does."

"Yes," I replied, "that paper is true; Jesus loves you and died to save you, and I, His servant am come to tell you of His love. Now which of you will be the first to promise to be at the 'Chapel for the Destitute' to-night?"

This was met with a loud laugh from all the company, one of them observing, "That's a capital joke."

Here let me better describe the characters I was trying to induce to attend a place of worship. I have mentioned the dancing man, the flat-nosed man, and the singing woman, called Jenny Lind. In addition to these there was one they called "peg-leg." This man was polishing his wood-leg with the black-lead brush. On asking him why he did not use blacking, he replied that black-lead made his trousers slip up and down better. There was a thin man, with thick black hair, well greased with oil. He had a piece of a broken looking glass in his hand, and was trying to divide his hair in the middle, seeming very particular about it. One man, collier-like, sat on his heels beside the fire. He had a long black beard, and a dirty, ragged, red slop for a shirt. There were two old men, both poorly dressed, but one of them much cleaner than the other. The cleaner one had a large pair of spectacles on his forehead, and a grey-headed old woman for his wife. All the rest of the lodgers were fit companions of the above; but those more particularly specified we shall have to refer to again."

Wishing to get some one to volunteer, I laid my hand on the shoulder of the thin man, who was trying to divide his hair, and requested him to give a challenge to the whole house. There was a general shout from all, that, "If I got him I should have the worst in the lot; they should like to see Bill Guest in a chapel." "Yes," said the wood-leg man, "If Bill goes, I go." "And me," said the flat-nosed man; "And me," said the redslop; "And me," said Jenny Lind; "And me," said the old man with the large spectacles. Bill very coolly observed that "They had better mind what they were doing, or he would surprise some of

them." But the whole fifteen declared they would go if he went. "Then I go," said Guest; "and now let me see which of you dare show the white feather." We bargained that I was to call for them at six o'clock, to show them the way.

The next place of call was in a miserable-looking house, in which sat three men, on a short plank, supported by a few bricks. There was no other seat in the place. A square table with only two legs (and which I unwittingly upset), was reared against the wall. A few broken pots, and an old rusty knife, were all the furniture in the house. They offered to go with me to the chapel if I would pay for a gallon of ale. One of them said he never went to chapel except when he was in prison, and he rather boasted of having been there six times. He was literally clothed in rags, and was without shirt. He offered to give up his share in the gallon of beer, and go with me to chapel, if I would send him a shirt. "Now I have you," said he, laughing; "send me a shirt, and I go."

"And will you bring your friends with you if I do?" I asked.

"Yes," said they all; "we will come if you find him a shirt."

They seemed greatly amused with the fix in which they had placed me; but, a few minutes after, I rather astonished them by producing a clean shirt. I do not say how I got it, only I did not buy it.

My next adventure was among a number of idlers on the stone bridge. While giving them my bills, a blustering young man, dirty, but expensively dressed, came up, and wanted to know what my papers were about. I handed him one; he read it, and then said, "Mr. Ashworth, look at me. You see a man that deserves damnation, if ever man did. I am the unworthy son of the best of fathers and mothers. They set me a good example, but I got amongst wicked companions, have spent in cursed

drink hundreds of pounds, wandered from home, and now I am a wretched outcast."

"But if you are a wanderer from home, and not a Rochdale man, how do you know me," I asked.

"I heard you give an address in Bury last April, and heard you point out the curse that tracks the steps of those that dishonour their parents; and believing you intended it for me, I felt at the time that I could have shot you. But all you said is true; there is a dark look-out for every young man and woman who wilfully cause sorrow to their parents, especially if they are like mine."

"Will you come to the chapel to-night; there is mercy for the worst, if they earnestly seek mercy."

"Yes, I will come, but I shall never have mercy until I repent of my conduct to my parents."

It was now five o'clock. In an hour and a quarter I should have to meet my first congregation at the "Chapel for the Destitute." I went home to tea, but could not eat. I went up stairs, and falling on my knees, poured out my soul to God for help. "Lord, help me, Lord, help me," was all I could say, though I remained long in prayer.

Exactly at six I called on my sixteen friends at the lodging house. My entrance was the signal for a general move. Bill Guest had finished dividing his hair, and had done his best to look smart. Boz., or Boswell, had fitted on his leg, and all were instantly ready. Not one had shown the "white feather." They laughed at each other, and were all greatly excited. "Who will lead up?" was bawled out by the red-slop man; and it was agreed we should go two abreast, I and Boz. (the wood-legged man) being the first. In this order we marched down King-street, over the iron-bridge, through the Butts to the preaching room. All the way we attracted much attention, some remarking we were the awkward

squad, others that we were going to the rag shop, whilst others exclaimed, "That bangs all." But what was to them a cause of merriment was to me a source of great anxiety. As I walked quietly on with the wood-legged man, I could not keep back my tears." "Lord, help me!" was still my earnest prayer.

On my arriving at the room, I found my friend with the new shirt and his two companions, had already taken their seats; also three well-known characters, — Lis Dick, Leach, and Sprowel, — two shillings would have been a good price for the wardrobe of all three; then followed the prodigal son and four others, in all, twenty-seven persons.

I had provided the Religious Tract Society's penny hymn-book, and handed one to each; then, taking my place behind a table, I gave out the page. Few could find the hymn, but all pretended to do so; and when I set the tune, the Old Hundred, I found that not one of the men, and only one of the women, could join in singing, and that one was the so called Jenny Lind I could have well dispensed with *her* help, for she began singing before she knew what the tune was, and she had a screeching voice, the effect of which on my nerves was something like that produced by the sharpening of a saw with a file; this caused a general titter through the congregation. I had intended to sing five verses, but was glad to give up with three. Whatever Jenny's success was in singing in the streets and public-houses I know not, but I know I was afraid to join her a second time, though my friends give me credit for being a tolerably good singer. So ludicrous had been the whole performance that many of the congregation were almost convulsed with suppressed laughter, and I did not think it prudent to engage in prayer until they were in a more serious state of mind, so I requested

them to sit down. I then began to tell them all about my reasons for beginning a place of worship for the destitute, of my visit to London, what I there saw, and the vow I made; told them how I had broken my vow, been afflicted and again vowed and prayed for help; told them of my own conversion to God, how long I had served Him, and how happy I was in His love; but above all, told them of the love of Jesus Christ in dying to save their souls from hell, and bring them to heaven; pointed out the dreadful consequences of rejecting God's mercy, and the misery of a life of sin, and besought them all, at once, to seek salvation through the shed blood of the Redeemer.

I have spoken to many congregations, but to none more attentive than these twenty-seven. O, how my soul did yearn in love to those miserable beings; the young prodigal—the wanderer from home—the wretched son of praying parents writhed in agony; some wept, and all were serious. I then proposed prayer, but told them that they might stand, sit, or kneel, just as they liked, but they all knelt down, and ere we rose the Spirit of God worked with power. Lis Dick, and the old man with the large spectacles, remained on their knees after the others had risen; they both afterwards confessed that they had not prayed for years before.

We like this little book, for it narrates as much of disappointment as success. Oh that societies and reports, missionaries and ministers, would encourage us more by the stories of disappointments; for us, we can truly say, the history of what did not succeed has often been to us as helpful as the story of what has been most successful. Mr. Ashworth took up a work which is sure to yield plenty of

disappointment, but he wrought on; a man's faith must be higher than his work in himself and higher than himself in the truth for which he works. This excellent labourer went about among the low lodging houses, tramps, hawkers, rag and bone dealers, scavengers, donkey drivers—into those strange museums of human natural history, the travellers rooms.

Here I have spent many hours amongst both old and new comers, and on this occasion there was a fair specimen of the nomadic tribes. Simpering sellers of religious tracts; knitters of night-caps; makers of wim-wams and pincushions; a band of German musicians, and an organ man with a monkey; a blind man with a leading-dog—not so blind but he could see to fry beefsteaks and onions; an old woman travelling to see her only daughter, whom she had been seeking for two years, and made it pay well; another woman begging for money to repair a broken mangle, for which she had been three times in prison; a tall, broken-down schoolmaster, with a red nose and a broken hat; an old man and his wife travelling to their own parish, with a bottle of rum to help them on their way; a young dandy, with a ruffled shirt, and dressed in seedy black; a quack doctor; three women in search of their husbands, whom they had searched for so long that they had very brown faces—one of them had received a black eye from her husband the previous evening. Almost every one of these were impostors, and a fair specimen of the frequenters of low lodging-houses.

The red-nosed schoolmaster, suspecting my errand, wished to "argue a few points on religion," pompously proclaiming himself a clever man on all controverted points, having

never yet found his match in any encounter. I replied that I always endeavoured to avoid clever men, and wished to be excused; but this did not satisfy this seedy-looking champion, for he was determined to have a tilt. However, he condescendingly offered to let me off with answering the following question:—

“How could there be a just Providence, when men possessing scarcely any learning, and almost as ignorant as Hottentots, should greatly prosper in this world, while a man of his intelligence and abilities should be in poverty and rags?”

When I replied that his red nose would furnish him with the true elucidation of his problem, there was a loud burst of laughter from all the travellers, in which the schoolmaster heartily joined.

And when he preached to these people, his words were plain and piercing to the most natural conscience—of one gathering he says:—

Two of the new comers, this second Sunday evening, consisted of a thin gray-haired old man, and a little, thickset man; both were in rags. The short man drove a donkey cart, had been a good fighter and drinker. He could not read, though he was sixty years of age. Taking them all together, I had again a strange congregation; and, now that Jinny was gone, I was the only one that tried to sing; for though I set the most common tunes, none of them could help me. This night I ventured to take the following text, Mark v. 19—

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.” I divided it as follows:—

1. *The man here mentioned had a devil in him.*

2. *He came to Christ to have it taken out.*

3. *Christ cast out the devil, and*

sent the man to tell his friends about it.

4. *Christ can still cast out devils, if we will come to Him.*

I told them that there were swearing devils, drinking devils, lying devils, thieving devils, filthy devils, Sabbath-breaking devils, and idle devils;—that when Christ cast them out, He did not cast them out one at a time, but *all at once*, and I tried to show them how happy the man must be who got rid of all these devils by coming to Christ. And on asking them to examine themselves, in order to find out which of these devils possessed them, Less Dick, with much feeling, called out, “All of them.”

Boz., the wooden-legged man, and Clough, the donkey-cart driver, both date their conversion from that night.

We believe that we make serious mistakes in expecting results from Christian activities to be always proportioned by our type and standard of worldly respectability; probably there is not a single missionary station, of which we have heard rich and glowing accounts, that would not disappoint us if we were to visit it. Not that much has not been done, and that we ought not to be satisfied, but that we expect too much; human nature is unreasonable, and we do not measure achievements by circumstances; hence, we do not know what many of our readers would think of Mr. Ashworth's successes, but to us many of them seem glorious. We must give two or three instances from what he calls “the white side” of the narrative.

Amongst the promising cases I

will only mention one, an elderly man—tall, straight, with Roman nose, fiery eyes, and thin, firm compressed lips, evidently a man of considerable force of character—though clothed in rags, he was travelling through the country selling halfpenny toys made from scraps of fancy paperhangings. On requesting this man to come to the "Chapel," he immediately stood at ease, and informed me that I was speaking to a man who, had it not been for his own stomach, might have been an officer in the British army.

"Then you are an old soldier, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, I am by trade a wholesale murderer by order of a Christian government; but if I was to do a little retail on my own account they would tickle my neck; and as for going to hear the twaddle of a parson, I shall do no such thing; for they dare not preach without gown, they cannot preach without book, and they will not preach without money. When I can find a man that cares nothing about trimmings and bands, preaches from God's Word and not from the creeds of sects, and does it as did the first Apostles—from love, then I will go to hear him."

"It is not difficult to form an excuse where there is no disposition," I replied; "but if preaching without gown, sermon-book, and pay, be to you a recommendation, then I am your man, though I do not pretend to be better on that account."

"But a thousand to one you will have a collection under some pretence, and collections are nought in my line," he observed.

"No, we never have collections for any purpose, for I am anxious to remove all possible objections, and to take away every excuse from men of your class and character; not that I object to collections, for I believe that where there is a heart to give the Lord's cause a penny, the Lord will provide a penny to give."

For a moment the old soldier looked on the ground in silence, then rearing himself straight up, he said—

"Well, I have met my match at last, and will mount guard with the awkward squad in your chapel tomorrow. So you may look out for Captain Dick."

He kept his word, for during the singing of the first hymn Captain Dick pushed his way through the crowd, came near the platform and sat down on my left, beside old Lawrence and Pinder; he evidently thought he was conferring a favour upon me by coming. The lesson that night was the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, and, while reading the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son, Captain Dick wept like a child—his haughty spirit was bowed down—and, at the conclusion of the service, he was so affected he could only press my hand, not being able to speak. On the Monday he called to bid me good bye, and expressed a wish that he too might arise and go to his Heavenly Father; "For," said he, "I am a poor prodigal, and it is many years since I felt the force of God's Word as I did last night. The Lord have mercy on a miserable wicked wanderer."

On expressing my fears that he would not be able to get bread by his few toys, and offering to increase his stock by purchasing him one shilling's worth of material—"No," he replied, "I can make do what I have, and it shall never be said that I only went to chapel to get something given me; there are too many do that."

When Dick's business leads him to Rochdale, he invariably attends the "Destitute." No one in the congregation seems more serious. He has given up snarling at parsons, as he calls them, and I have great hopes of him becoming a changed man, for he has entirely given up drinking, and carries a Testament in his pocket—two good signs of a reformation.

Another instance.—

I mentioned a man who was blackleading his wooden leg, and that was one of my first congregation, whose name was Boswell; he got his bread by tramping through the country selling tape, laces, &c., and had led a very wild life, but he became so attached to the services at the "Destitute," that he would come from Bury, Bacup, or Todmorden, to be present; he was seldom absent, and he became a truly changed character; the house of God was to him the house of joy and peace. I had missed him several Sundays, when I received the following letter from his wife, which I give literally.

"Bolton, Oct. 26, 1862.

"Sir,—I take the earliest opportunity of acquainting you with my loss, but it is my dear Husband's Gain. He departed this life yesterday morning at 9 o'clock. He had painful illness and gone under a severe operation. He had a very happy end, he blessed his Jesus and was constantly in prayer blessing his God. You will know him, he lived at Smith's, in King St.; he had a wooden leg and went with Wm. Guest, at the opening of your Chapl. Guest read words of consolation to him from the Bible which made him very happy; he Blest you, he said you taught him what he never forgot, to seek his Saviour and temperance. Will you please to forgive this liberty, and I shall feel a great consolation in a letter from you. Yours truly, Mary Boswell.
In care of William fish, 149, Kay,
little Bolton."

I felt a degree of sorrow on hearing of Boswell's death, and the letter from his wife forcibly reminded me of walking by his side through the streets amidst the jeers of the spectators; he was the first man that entered with me into the chapel, and one of the sixteen called the awkward squad, and Bill Guest, the man that was dividing his hair looking through the piece of broken glass—Guest, the man that all declared was the worst in the lot, he is the person mentioned in the letter as praying with, and reading words of consolation from the Bible to the

dying Christian, who found a Saviour at the "Destitute." Farewell, my dear friend, thou art gone to where there are neither rags nor sins, to that happy place where missing limbs are never known, for there are no wood legs in heaven.

Another,—

I have mentioned a short, stout man that was well known as a terrible drunkard and swearer; he would fight any man his weight, he was truly ignorant, could not read, and earned his living by driving a donkey; how this man got amongst us I did not know, but after coming several times, he brought a tall man, one of his companions in sin; in all weathers, and at all the services, the long and short man regularly attended, to the astonishment of all that knew them. The first intimation of a change in the short man, was his telling me he was learning to read, and he wanted me to get him a Bible with large print.

"Why, Clough, are you thinking of learning to read the Bible at sixty years of age?" I observed.

"A. I am, and by God's help I will, for it will never do for me to live as I have done."

"Do you ever pray, Clough?" I asked

"Do I, a, mony a time a day; I never go into dunkey cote to yoke it up or give it ought to eat, but I go down o' me knees, un mony a time a day beside. I hope God will a'-mercy on me, un I think He will. That tall man ut comes we me is in a wary way too, he's cried mony a hewer obewt his wicked life, un he may weel, for he's bin a swetter; were nother on us reet, nobot wen we com to chapel."

Clough got a Bible with large print, and soon learned to read it; for three years he has lived a life of faith in the Son of God, and he says his donkey feels the benefit of his becoming religious, for he does not beat it now, and it goes better without "thumping," as he calls it.

I called to see him on Friday last, and found his wife very poorly; he seemed much distressed about her spiritual condition, he spoke tenderly to her, entreating that she would not despair of mercy, declaring that if all the world was his own, he would give it to hear her say that her sins were pardoned.

The tall man, that Clough mentioned as crying about his sinful life, resided at a place called Spotland Bridge. In addition to drinking, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, he had been a scoffer and mocker at the Bible; sneering at, and scorning, every one professing religion. On speaking to him after the service, one Thursday evening, he seemed greatly distressed, and informed me that, thinking on the wickedness of his past life often made him break out in sweating and weeping. I lent him several books, and frequently spoke words of encouragement to him; he sought forgiveness in sighs and groans, obtained mercy, and became one of the happiest men I ever met with. Wolfenden—for that was his name—was an astonishing testimony of the power of saving Grace. For near four years he walked humbly with his God in newness of life, and then God took him. I said a few words by way of a funeral sermon, for he was a man well known; his widow and a large family of grown-up children were present. After the sermon they all gathered round me, weeping; the oldest daughter, taking hold of my hand, said, "Jesus Christ never saved a worse man than my father was; no one knew him as his family did, and you little know what we have had to suffer through him; but, for the last three years, he has been one of the best of men, and with his last breath he blessed God for this place of worship."

After Wolfenden's conversion, he became anxious about his old companions in sin. By his persuasion, a tall, elderly man, named Grindrod,

who had not been in a place of worship for twenty years, began to attend the "Destitute." On his return from service the first night, he astonished his wife by asking if there was not a Bible somewhere in the house. The power of the Gospel on this man was amazing; he became humble as a child, and greedily drank in the Word, which soon became to him a word of peace and joy.

What do our readers think of a prayer like that in the following paragraph which John Ashworth has attempted to report:—

The old man with large spectacles, named Solomon, one of the sixteen that attended the first service, obtained like precious faith, travelled through the country selling his tape, pins, and needles, telling everywhere what the Lord had done for him for three years, then died blessing God for His mercies to him in his old age, and his grey-headed old widow is still with us in all our services.

At the conclusion of one of our week-night services, a poor man, in the simplicity of his heart, offered up the following prayer, which well describes the effect the Gospel had on many that were present:—

"O Lord! I thank Thee on my bended knees for what Thou hast done for a lot of the worst men and women in Rochdale. Who could have thought of seeing us on our knees praying; we cannot laugh one at another, for we have all been bad enough, and we are all poor as Lazarus; but if we are poor in pocket, we are getting rich in faith, and that's better than oth' brass ith' world. I saw some rich folks in the market buying fat geese and legs of mutton, but I had to be content with a penny red herring; I thought there's a difference, but I do not envy them, for I daresay they have their troubles of some sort. Brass

does not give as much comfort as religion. Jesus Christ sent the Disciples to tell John, that the poor had the Gospel preached to them, and the Gospel gives more comfort than brass, fat geese, and legs of mutton. I know one thing, it has made a vast difference in our house; my wife had always a sad tongue, which I know to my sorrow, but there is a mighty change for the better; everybody is astonished how she is mended; we now kneel down together every day; but six months since we should as soon thought of flying as praying. If this chapel does no more good nor mending my wife, it will have done a great deal; she knows what I am saying is true—for she is knelt here beside me—and the religion of Jesus Christ can mend anybody, except the devil, for I guess he cannot be mended; if he could it would mend him, for it has mended lots here almost as bad as him. The Lord help us to stand fast, for if He does not we shall tumble. Amen."

While Matthew was praying, I felt my cheeks burning, and was anxious he would conclude much sooner than he did, for I feared that his wife would again make use of her "sad tongue" on their way home; yet, singular as it may seem, none present appeared surprised, for if the poor simple ignorant people must pray, they must use their own language. I strongly object to studied vulgarity in prayer, but where it is sincere it is more excusable. Matthew is still with us, and may be seen every Sabbath, patiently assisting a feeble old man to and from our place of worship.

We quote at length from this most interesting little book, because we do not know when we have seen such a collection of instances illustrative of the power of simple earnestness of purpose in the determination to reach

souls. What a story is that of Niff and his dogs.

When a boy there was no man I feared so much; for on all hands Niff was considered one of the worst of men, and he tried, in every possible way, to make all the men for miles around as bad as himself. He was a great encourager of bull-baiting, and bull-baits were held about once a fortnight; he kept a number of fighting-cocks, trained for the degrading sport, besides the dogs he kept for gambling purposes.

All the wicked publicans in the neighbourhood kept on good terms with Niff. He would get up a cock-battle at the house of one, a bull-bait at another, a trail-hunt for a third, a dog-fight for a fourth, or a foot-race for a fifth; seldom did a week pass without hundreds upon hundreds of men and boys, and sometimes even women, coming rolling into the village from the surrounding towns and districts, when scenes the most revolting took place. Dogs worried to death; cocks killed; the bull's nose and face torn by the fierce dogs, making him bellow and roar in agony, and in his rage snap the strong rope that bound him, and dash into the dense mass of men, women, and children, amidst yells, shouts, screams, and cursing, as if hell itself had broken loose. Human beings, more brutal, savage, and degraded than either bulls or bull-dogs,—furious as fiends, and maddened with drink, rushed upon each other in deadly strife, until midnight mercifully covered with darkness the revolting horrors, leaving us to wonder that the earth had not opened and swallowed up the guilty multitude.

A few men such as Niff, and his wicked confederates, the publicans, planned and carried out these infernal gatherings, which resulted in the destruction of hundreds both body and soul. All the publicans and ringleaders yet alive are reduced to beggary and rags, unpitied

and despised,—additional illustrations that “the wicked shall not go unpunished.”

Passing through the locality that had formerly been the scene of such abominations, I once again met Niff. He had the same dirty appearance and savage look as when I saw him twenty years before, with a short, filthy pipe in his mouth, and three gambling, or trail-dogs in leading chains;—he was again going to a dog-race. The moment we met, I stood still right before him, and said,—

“Well, Niff, how are you?”

He, too, stood still, pulled the short pipe out of his mouth, and rather gruffly, answered,—

“I do not know that it much matters how I am; just stand on one side and let me and my dogs have room to pass.”

“But before you pass I should like to tell you what thought was passing through my mind the moment I saw you and your dogs.”

He looked defiant, made no reply, but stood still.

“I have been thinking you are the worst man out of hell, and I am amazed you have not gone there long since. You have been the ringleader of every description of wickedness for the last thirty years; you have led hundreds, if not thousands into sin and ruin, and I fear many of them are for ever lost; and yet you, the principal cause of their destruction, are permitted to live on in your wickedness; you are the greatest wonder of God’s mercy in all Lancashire.”

But this most worthless and wretched creature became a humble, simple, converted Christian man. These are the miracles which supersede all other evidences, and make unbelief almost impossible. One other illustration shall close our extracts.

The old man here referred to had

attended the Chapel for the Destitute about nine months. Every one that knew him laughed at the very thought of old Pinder attending a place of worship. Thirty years ago, placards might be seen in almost every street, informing the public that Pinder would worry rats with his hands tied to his back, at such a public house, on such a day. This degrading exhibition was as follows:—A nail was driven into the middle of a large table, and a string tied to the nail and to the tail of the rat—the string being just long enough to prevent the rat from getting off the table. Pinder, with his hands tied behind him, caught the rats and worried them with his mouth, for sixpence each; and the spectators had to give threepence each for the gratification of witnessing this exhibition,—all profits, of course, going to the publican. In addition to worrying rats, he could leap over five-and-twenty chairs at five-and-twenty leaps; he would fight any man or any dog, and was the leader at all bull-baits or dog races. He was a terrible character, had a strong constitution, and now, in his old age, he has the frame of a once-powerful man. But, strong as he was, he informed me that his brother George was stronger; for he once carried a full-grown donkey from Bury to Manchester (about nine miles), without once stopping to rest.

But Joseph Taylor (for that was his real name) was one of my most regular and attentive hearers; he seemed to drink in every word, and was very willing to be taught the way of salvation. Meeting him one Monday morning, a few months ago, he said, “I wanted to see you, for I am very uneasy; your text last night has made me very ill.” The text to which Joseph referred was Revelation xx. 12:—“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life:

and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

"Are the words you preached from God's truth? and is what we have done really written down against us?" Joseph earnestly inquired. "Yes, Joseph, so the word of God informs us," I replied.

"Dear me, if it be so, I have a weary shot on, and I must have it out some road. Did you not say that the blood of Jesus Christ could wash it out?"

"Yes: Christ shed his blood that sin might be forgiven, man made happy, and made ready for heaven," I answered.

"I wish you would come and see me where I lodge, and tell me more about it, for it will never do as it is."

From that day to the moment I am writing, I have felt great interest in Joseph; and that was the reason I was anxious old Lawrence should go and see him. He met me according to agreement, and accompanied me to the lodgings of the notorious old sinner.

Lawrence placed his hat on the floor, sat down on a rickety chair, laid his hand on old Joseph's knee, and looking him in the face, said, — "Old friend, I feel for you. I feel for your poverty, for I, too, am very poor, and have known how keen and bitter a thing it is to be poor and dependent in old age. But, though I am poor in pocket, I am rich in my soul; for though I have been one of the worst men ever God made, yet, in His wonderful goodness and mercy, He has spared my life, and pardoned my sins. O! my dear old brother, God is rich in mercy, and if you come just as you are, and believe with all your heart on the Lord Jesus Christ, He is able to save you. He has saved me; and if He has saved me, I think no one need despair, for I was the chief of sinners."

All the time Lawrence was speaking to old Joseph tears ran down the cheeks of both. Lawrence wept tears of sympathy and gratitude, and Joseph tears of sorrow and penitence. Wiping his face with his coat-sleeve he replied, "You are very good for coming to see me, and I like your talk very well. I have been on my knees many a score of times this last week, but it seems of no use. I feel the great black spot is not wiped off yet. O! I have been such a bad man. I have been very cruel to my family, and wicked every way. I have been drunk thousands of times, and sworn millions of times. I have been guilty of everything but murder, and it is a wonder I have not done that. I am too bad for hell, never name going to heaven; yet I want to go where Jesus is, for I am always thinking of Him, how He died for sinners."

This last sentence caused Lawrence to lift up both hands, and he exclaimed with great earnestness, "What! are you always thinking about Him! Why, man, if you are always thinking about Him, He is not far off you. I was always thinking about Him; I thought I was at Calvary, on the spot where He was crucified; and I laid me down, put my arms round the bottom of the cross, and thought I felt his blood dropping on to me! and it seemed in a moment as if everything was changed. I felt so happy that I began shouting out,—O Lord! O Lord! O glory be unto my Saviour, and my God."

While Lawrence was talking, Joseph was kneeling down. He buried his wrinkled face in his withered hands,—his thin, long, white hair, hanging over his fingers, and in deep agony said, "O Lord! O Lord! is there mercy?—Is there mercy? Do pray for me, O do pray for poor me." Lawrence and I also knelt down, and I whispered him to engage in prayer for Joseph.

I have heard many strange prayers

from the simple and unlearned, but none more simple or more strange, and I believe more earnest, than that prayer offered by old Lawrence for his aged brother seeking mercy. After a moment's pause he began,—“O Lord God Almighty! Thou sees us three kneeled on these flags; two of us are converted and the other wants to be. Thou had a job when Thou saved me, and now there is another of the same sort; but Thou did save me, and Thou can save old Joe. I think he is very near saved, but somehow he does not think so; but he will soon think so, if he holds on as he is doing, for nobody 'at loves Jesus goes to hell. O Lord, just do for him as Thou hast done for me.”—“John, you pray, for you are more used to it than I am.”

But Joseph had begun, for his spirit was crushed within him. With heaving breast and choking words he confessed his sins in bitterness of spirit. He bewailed his past life, and saw no hope that sin and wickedness such as his could ever be forgiven, finishing with these words, “O Lord, if Thou dost not forgive me, there is no chance for me, and I shall as sure be lost as ever I was born; and what a thing that will be! But I will 'liver myself up to Thee entirely. Thou hast saved this other old man, happen Thou can save me too. Jesus Christ died for me, same as him, and I will 'liver myself up to Him entirely; if He can save me, He shall do, for I will never give it up while I live.”

We have really felt shame while quoting at such length from this little book, but it recites tales, again we say, we covet and love to hear. We depreciate no means effecting an entrance into souls. The man bathed in power, all his faculties alive, and on the stretch with the intensest ardours of poetry and argument,—the massive man, using his words like projectiles or

weapons derived from some great arsenal, for assaulting the inmost recesses and sophistries of the intelligence—even the neat and fastidiously careful man, who wraps up his feelings into small sentences, and polishes away all the angles of expression—the hesitating, clumsy, but scholarly man, who feels that he only fulfils himself as he enters the neighbourhood of scholars—for all these men, in the degree in which the instinct for souls is stirred within them, we have veneration and affection. Brothers and fathers, all hail! but John Ashworth will be the best type of man for the evangelist; especially there is a great deal of work best done as the “saints and serious” people keep out of the way. Their criticisms, and remarks, and physiognomies are very often not a help to a man, but a great hindrance. We would have all these things pondered in efforts made at teaching either artizans in towns or labourers in villages. The principal interest of Congregationalism in this matter is, that Congregationalism alone, for the most part, can effect it. We want a band of men, gifted with a free spirit, able to preach with a gown or without a gown—able to use a liturgy, or to let it alone without detriment to their devotion—able to pitch a tune themselves, and carry a congregation aloft upon the wings of it, or to yield themselves with as much pleasure to the subduing powers of an organ or a

choir. The Church of England mode of conversion, as we very well know, proceeds upon the assumption of the young brother who happily furnished us with our text—it must be done in gown and bands;—the principal feature of congregationalism, to our minds, is, that it is *versus* sacerdotalism. There are two chief foes to the religious life in England everywhere,—indifference is one, sacerdotalism, which is an easy lapse from indifferentism, is the other. Congregationalism is the corrective for both; it is the corrective for indifference, for it strikes at the individual conscience; it is a corrective for sacerdotalism, for it places man above all dependence upon sacraments and forms; but then it is necessary that the spirit of the instructors shall be itself charged with the life it aims to convey. Where the ministry of the word is not an instinct, it will be, as it was promised Jerusalem should be, “a burdensome stone.” Even at the best, how difficult it is to bear up the spirit in the midst of bodily depression and weariness, the captiousness of a diseased thirst and morbid curiosity, the fainting of the spirit before the unfaithfulness and sometimes the treachery of friends; all these difficulties have to be thought of, for they have to be encountered; but these trials will be greater still when there is a demand for large re-

sources of bodily strength; the call upon nervous energy for repeated visitation, and constant conversation where conversation is to be a reality. Most persons hope to get through life with ease some day, this the true-hearted minister can never hope to do; to him his work must always be toilsome and anxious, for ever haunted by the instinct of souls; his very ground of anxiety not comprehended; perhaps, by even his friends around him regarded as a mystical vagary, a half-diseased dream, fearful of himself, fearful for others, impelled and moved by a restlessness caused by that brooding spirit, which of old hovered over the face of the deep. When we think of all these things, we confess we do not hope great things from any mere new effort, rather we must use as best we can the very poor, inadequate, and incompetent machinery we can command. Perhaps God may have some resources of great men, strong instinctive souls,—yet who knows? But, certainly, in the light of our modern poverty in all the great things of soul, we may express our hopelessness “till the spirit be poured out from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.”